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Thursday, September 25, 2014

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A 'selfish few' face £100 car park fine

FINES of £100 for commuters who park badly at railway and Midland Metro stations are coming into force from Monday.

The sum will be reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days, but further charges will be incurred if it is not paid within 28 days. Motorists will have the right of appeal.

Transport authority Centro, which is responsible for free park and ride stations, said it had problems getting a replacement coach service through Stourbridge Junction car park on September 2 because of bad parking but there were issues across all its 59 sites. Warning notices are being put up and more than 20,000 leaflets distributed to users.

Councillor Roger Horton, Centro lead member for rail and Metro, said motorists parking correctly were suffering at the hands of a selfish few whose lack of consideration was also putting pedestrians at risk.

He said: "Incorrectly parked vehicles have seen other motorists blocked in for hours at a time, while pedestrians are put at risk because of cars parked on pavements. There are emergency service vehicles that may need to access the station being obstructed by badly parked cars. This cannot be allowed to continue."

Talent show at festival

ORGANISERS of this year's Brickhouse Festival in Rowley Regis are keeping their fingers crossed for good weather when the rearranged event goes ahead on Sunday at Moor Lane Open Space, opposite Powke Lane Cemetery.

It will feature a car boot sale, zorb football, a fun fair, pig roast and musical entertainment. The event runs noon to 6pm and includes a talent competition at 4pm.

The event had to be called off in July due to torrential rain.

COLLEGE SCHEME PARKING FEARS

Jobs lost as phone stores are to close

SCORES of Phones 4u workers across the region have lost their jobs.

Administrators for the collapsed retail chain announced they were shutting 362 stores and axing 1,700 posts nationwide.

Phones 4u branches are being closed at Merry Hill, the New Square shopping centre at West Bromwich and across Birmingham.

Although mobile network operators EE and Vodafone have snapped up 200 stores, saving 1,250 jobs, administrators from PricewaterhouseCoopers have said there is no chance of saving the rest of the business.

Although 720 people are being kept on to help wind the business down, a further 1,679 have now been made redundant with the final batch of closures. Among those closing are the two branches at Merry Hill and others in Hagley Street in Halesowen, Dudley High Street, and in Birmingham city centre, Selly Park and Shirley.

Phones 4u went into administration after EE's decision not to renew its supply contract.

Phones 4u had an annual turnover of £1 billion, with more than 700 stores and a total of 5,596 employees. But the firm collapsed as EE and Vodafone pulled out of long-standing deals to sell devices through the retailer.

Fire station demolition

DEMOLITION plans for a Black Country fire station have been approved.

Developer Horgan Homes & Developments Ltd had submitted proposals to knock down Halesowen Fire Station. The firm has already been granted permission to build 14 homes on the site.

Now it will flatten the old station and training tower off Hagley Road. Money from the sale went towards a £3 million replacement station in Cradley Heath.

Record turnout for Black Country race



A record number of runners cross the start line of the 10k Black Country Road Race held in Halesowen

HUNDREDS took to the streets of Halesowen in the increasingly-popular Black Country Road Run.

The third such run in the town, which took place on Sunday and attracted a record number of participants to the 10-kilometre and a five-kilometre runs.

Young and old took part, with some choosing to don fancy dress.

Organiser and Rotarian Alan Bowler said: "We had 800 plus spread across the two runs, which is great. It was a fantastic day, everyone was saying they had a great run."

"It has grown year on year, we had

among the masses making their way around the town on the run was famous fundraiser 'Blind Dave' Heeley, from West Bromwich, who was raising money for national diabetes charity JDRF by taking part in the fun run, and also Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris.

Fundraising teams were also running, such as those from children's charity Barnardo's and Sunfield Children's Home in Cleint, to raise much-needed funds.

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HALESOWEN CHRONICLE

Duke of York in visit to E&S offices

Five apprentices join the E&S

THE Duke of York Prince Andrew was due to visit the Express & Star's Wolverhampton headquarters this week to give his backing to the Ladder for the Black Country campaign.

His Royal Highness is patron of the scheme encouraging businesses to take on apprenticeships to solve high levels of youth unemployment.

The campaign, launched in the Express & Star last week, is off to a flying start with 80 apprenticeships created

the first day alone. And many other firms are now in talks with the campaign after a public launch at the Black Country Chamber of Commerce's annual exhibition.

The Duke will meet with young people already taking their first steps on the job ladder. The Express & Star has joined forces with the Vine Trust, Performance Through People, and the Black Country Chamber of Commerce to help young people.



Visit - Prince Andrew

Bus death man was looking other way

A GRANDFATHER who died after being hit by a bus stepped out in front of the moving vehicle while looking in the other direction.

Michael Wilkinson walked out in front of the single-deck bus about a second before being struck at the junction of King Street and Flood Street in Dudley.

The 69-year-old, of Highfield Road, Kates Hill, suffered serious injuries and died the following day at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Pc Paul Robbins, a collision investigator, told the inquest in Smethwick that there were five cameras on the bus which recorded the accident near the entrance of the Churchill Shopping Centre on March 24.

He said the traffic light at the junction was showing green for the bus, which was moving at between 15 and 16mph. The speed limit on the road is 20mph.

The officer said Mr Wilkinson stepped out at a crossing at the junction. He added: "It shows him looking to his left, away from the bus. The last image of the man still shows him looking to his left. He was knocked off his feet."

Assistant coroner Zafar Siddique concluded he died as a result of the collision.

Firms' rush to help young is just the job

By Rob Golledge

FIRMS are queuing up to back the Ladder for the Black Country scheme to create new apprenticeships after the campaign's public launch.

Scores of business leaders from across the region got their first taste of the scheme at the Black Country Chamber of Commerce's annual exhibition at a packed Wolverhampton Racecourse.

Backed by the Duke of York Prince Andrew, the Express & Star has teamed up with the Vine Trust, a charity that is already helping to get young people into work, to create new apprenticeships.

Training provider Performance Through People (PTP), the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, and Ikea Wednesbury are also leading partners. At the time of going to press there had been 107 apprenticeship enquiries and 18 company enquiries.

Response

The newspaper itself has taken on five new apprentice journalists. Editor Keith Harrison said: "The Express & Star is proud to head up the Ladder for the Black Country, to drive home the message that apprenticeships work."

Campaign partner Kevin Davis, chief executive of the Vine Trust, gave an introductory speech at the launch, urging businesses to work together and get on board. Eighty apprenticeships have already been pledged by Accord Group, Walsall Housing Group, Ikea, and the Express & Star.

Ladder for the Black Country partner Gill Durkin, business development director for Performance Through People, said: "There has been an excellent response and we have had interest from organisations who want to get involved in all sorts of ways.

"The Ladder for the Black Country is not about all those companies that already have apprenticeships,



Plenty of interest at the launch of the scheme at the exhibition



www.laddertortheblackcountry.co.uk



Kevin Davis of the Vine Trust



The team behind the Ladder for the Black Country campaign at the launch

nesses sign up – it has been a real success. Once we sit down and talk with some of the companies we will know how many overall the event has created. But the pledges we have already received is fantastic."

Margaret Corneby, chief executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said: "Apprenticeships have had their ups and downs, especially with employers, but I think there is an awful lot of good work and some very good success stories to inspire young people."

"The Ladder for the Black Country is not about all those companies that already have apprenticeships,

it is about encouraging all those businesses that have never thought about them," she added. "There are a lot of companies out there who think it is too much paperwork or time to take on an apprentice."

"But what the Ladder for the Black Country has done has created a clearing centre – making it that much easier."

Ninder Johal, president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and member of the Local Enterprise Partnership, said the Black Country needed to close a skills gap.

The number of young people out of work in the Black Country is the highest in the country, with more than 8,000 18 to 24-year-olds in the dole queues each week.

Official figures show youth unemployment in the Black Country is more than double the national average, with Wolverhampton having the longest dole queues in England. Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley also all feature in the top 12 youth unemployment blackspots.

A website and call centre has been set up by PTP. Both young people and businesses can call the Ladder for Black Country hotline on 03332 409 699, or go to the website laddertortheblackcountry.co.uk.

Rider thrown from machine

A MOTORCYCLIST was seriously injured after being thrown 20ft from his three-wheeled bike in a crash with a bin lorry in Dudley.

David Clarke was rushed to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham following the accident at the junction of Stourbridge Road and Wellington Road last week. He suffered head injury and a suspected fractured pelvis.

Police closed Stourbridge Road for four hours after the crash for investigation and to recover the two vehicles.

The lorry driver was not injured.

Fair for children

PREPARATIONS are under way for an autumn fair in Sedgley in aid of a children's charity.

The event on Saturday, October 4, at Sedgley parish hall in Vicar Street will raise money for the Children's Society. It is free admission and is on from 11am to 2pm.

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Councillor is to step down in the spring

A LONG-SERVING councillor and former jewellery manufacturer has announced plans to step down at next year's council elections.

Halesowen councillor Bob James, a ward member for Belle Vale since 2000, will bring the curtain down on his political career in the spring.

The 68-year-old, of Hamilton Avenue, Hasbury, said he was not seeking re-election to Dudley Council due to health reasons.

During his time with the authority, the Conservative councillor has served as the vice-chairman of the planning committee and also as shadow spokesman.

Councillor James said he was proud that his work has helped his constituents, particularly by serving on the Halesowen housing area panel.

"It is all about being able to help individuals who come to you and getting things done for them," he said. "I've really enjoyed my time on the council and have made some good friends across the political divide."

Mr James established his own jewellery manufacturing factory in 1970 in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.

Landmark for new flats

A MULTI-MILLION pound transformation of a deserted office block was put on view to the public for the first time this week.

Developer Seven Capital has started work converting the former Point North at the Waterfront, Brierley Hill, into 181 flats. The company says 30 percent of the apartments have already sold about 30 per cent of the apartments.

A launch party for interested buyers was held at the site, now called The Landmark, and open weekends will be held at the former HQ for insurers Egg.

Hotel is to open

A £9.5 million hotel and pub restaurant will open in Stourbridge on December 1, it has been announced.

Work is progressing on building the Premier Inn and Beefeater pub in Birmingham Street.

The 80-bedroom hotel will create 20 jobs.

Elderly 'trapped' after bus service removed

ELDERLY passengers say they feel 'trapped' after a bus service was removed as part of an overhaul of routes in Dudley and Sandwell.

More than 100 people packed into a church hall last week to raise their concerns over the axing of the 297 service by National Express.

The service, which ran through Old Hill and Cradley Heath to Russells Hall Hospital, was ended in the summer after a fall in passenger numbers and reliability issues.

The 297 had ran down Station Road and served those in the Lodgefield estate. At the meeting in Old Hill's Our Lady of Lourdes Church, residents vented their frustration at company representative Jack Kelly.

Vulnerable

Marcia Harris, of Sherbourne Road, was there on behalf of elderly neighbours. She said: "It's for the most vulnerable that we are fighting. They should be thinking about the needs of the community."

Others complained that there is now no direct bus route to the hospital and claimed that they were not consulted properly before the route was discontinued.

Some from Coppice Lane in Quarry Bank explained that they now cannot get directly to Cradley Heath railway station.

National Express replaced the 297 with two separate services as it said the length of the 297 route was making it unreliable.

Since the service was removed more than 600 names have been gathered on a peti-

tion calling for its reinstatement. Stephanie Peacock, Labour candidate for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, said: "There's no direct bus from anywhere in the constituency to Russells Hall, and that's unacceptable."

Mr Kelly said he could not make any promises but would take their concerns to bosses at National Express.

He added: "I'm going to take my notes, speak to the guys, and try to get to the point where I can come back with good news."

Mechanic died underneath his car in a tragic accident

AN ENGINEER who was working on his car died when he accidentally pulled the vehicle on top of him, an inquest heard.

Stephen Millington, aged 53, from Halesowen, was underneath his Alfa Romeo at premises in Quarry Bank where he worked part-time as a mechanic.

Mr Millington's friend Paul Bate, who shared the workshop with him, found him underneath the car on October 11, last year.

Mr Bate said: "He was working on the roll bar and it was very close to the sub frame so he had to take that off. There was a 3ft bar by him so what I think happened was he was using the bar to pull it and it fell on top of him."

Alone

Mr Bate said Mr Millington, of Hanley Close, would often rush his work as a juggling work as a mechanic with his full-time job as a hospital engineer.

He added: "The day before he had been there alone to work on his car and was going to his caravan for the night before picking up a car in Bewdley for an MOT."

"I got there about 9.15am and the gates were unlocked, but I was expecting to see a Mondeo there, not his car."

"I could see his legs sticking out from under the car. I jacked it up straight away and then went to the motorbike shop next door to call an ambulance."

Jamie Davies, an inspec-

tor from the Health and Safety Executive, said Mr Millington was carrying out the work on uneven ground. He said: "The ground was sloped to the side and it was a combination of soft and hard standing."

Robin Balmain, senior coroner for the Black Country, said: "He was using a bar to carry out the work on the subframe by pulling it, and was pulling the car off the stands."

He added: "He was a hard-working man always running around but unfortunately the way he was working wasn't very safe. It seems to me that what Mr Bate said was right."

He said the medical cause of Mr Millington's death was asphyxia after being trapped under a car and recorded a conclusion that his death was an accident.

Louise Peters, Mr Millington's step-daughter, said: "He was a hard working man and just wanted the best for everybody."

Community litter pick event

RESIDENTS are invited to take part in a community litter picking event to help brighten up a corner of Halesowen.

People can attend the session in Shell Corner on Sunday from 2.30pm.

The event has been organised by the Shell Corner Partnership which is working on projects to improve the area.

Those wanting to take part are asked to meet at the junction of Maple Road and Long Lane.



Time for a selfie — family fun as the Walk for Dreams event starts at Himley Hall

Walkers making dreams a reality

THEY came in fancy dress, fluorescent legwarmers, as superheroes and fairytale characters – and they had one goal in mind.

More than 1,000 people walked from Himley Hall to Wolverhampton Racecourse to raise up to £50,000 for charity on Sunday.

Wolves legends Steve Bull, Jody Craddock and Don Goodman were on hand to show their support for the hundreds taking part in the Walk for Dreams event.

Organised by Wolverhampton-based Promise Dreams, the event saw crowds including tributes to Superman, Snow White, mums and the Jamaican bobsleigh team, trek the ten mile route via Molineux.

Promise Dreams was set up 12 years ago to help terminally-ill children and their families by granting a wish, with the £2.5 million raised so far going to help more than 2,400 families.

Co-founder and Wolverhampton businessman Suresh Basawasai said: "More than 1,000 people have registered and fundraised for the event. The day is a family day and is about having fun, we had lovely weather for it. Every pound that the walkers raise will go direct to help the children."

NEWS IN BRIEF

£25k facelift hall ready for relaunch

A £25,000 revamp of Dudley Town Hall has been completed. Dressing rooms have been transformed and the St James's Road venue also has new carpets and has been redecorated.

To celebrate the relaunch the council will hold a tea dance today at 11am. Councillor Hilary Bills said: "I'm sure the regular tea dancers will especially appreciate work to the floor."

One of the first to experience the improvements will be comedian John Bishop, who has sold out his show at the hall on October 3.

New operator for council care home

A CARE home in Kingswinford will be transferred to new operators within weeks.

More than 5,000 signed a petition to save New Bradley Hall after plans to axe the home surfaced.

Dudley Council did make a U-turn on that decision but pressed ahead with plans to install a new operator – the Black Country Housing Group – saying the authority could no longer afford to run the home in Compton Drive.

£200k cemetery to aid burial shortage

WORK on a £200,000 cemetery in Dudley to tackle the shortage of burial space in the borough will start this month.

Dudley Council has earmarked a section of land in Clea Road, opposite the existing Dudley Cemetery. The current cemetery has 12 months of burial space left. The new site will have enough space to last over 20 years and cater for all religious needs.

Councillor is to lead park group

A NEW chairman for a park voluntary group has been appointed after helping lead a revamp of King George V Park in Wordsley.

Councillor Derrick Hemmings was appointed chairman of the Friends of Wordsley Park group after previous chairman Chris Enwerem announced he was leaving the area to train to become a vicar.

Education centre

A TUITION centre for children has opened in Stourbridge, creating 20 jobs. Explore Learning is the final shop to open at the Crown Shopping Centre. It will provide maths and English tuition.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



PUZZLED why the United States has kept well out of Russia's slow-motion invasion of Ukraine? A clue came this week when Nasa announced it had chosen two private spacecraft to fly its crews to the International Space Station. This is a reminder that, since the withdrawal of the Shuttles, the US has had to rely on Russian rockets to get into space. If you're going anywhere important it's a golden rule that you must never fall out with the driver.

A REPORT reveals that thousands of customers tell lies to get car insurance. Some claim they have no convictions, others claim to be living at a false address. But if insurance customers are dodgy, what about insurance companies? I have just been to France, clutching a travel-insurance policy which included the fact that I had high blood pressure. But it also excluded any claims from customers undergoing medical tests or waiting for the results of tests. So tell me — how can anyone know they have high blood pressure without tests? Once diagnosed with high blood pressure you are, by definition, in for a lifetime of tests.

JOAO Magueijo is a Portuguese academic who has lived in Britain for more than 20 years and just written a book (sadly not yet translated from Portuguese) about those frightful Brits. He says we are a bunch of violent, sex-mad, lardarse alcoholics with revolting personal hygiene, riddled with self-destructive xenophobia and addicted to drinking "hot, dirty water," or tea, as we call it. So far, so good. Sadly, Magueijo spoils the effect by insisting his book is all tongue-in-cheek and he actually loves Britain and the Brits. Curious. For a moment there, he seemed to be rather close to the truth.

AT Calais the port is surrounded by high steel fences. Two pathetic shredded strips of cloth hang from the razor wire, fluttering in the breeze and marking the place where some would-be migrant's dreams came to an end. At the coach park by the wine warehouse, half-hidden in the trees, groups of young Africans stalk like wolves, looking for any unguarded vehicle. The lottery of life is as unfair as ever.

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Security to be stepped up after school fire

SECURITY will be stepped up at a derelict school in Blackheath in a bid to stop further arson attacks.

A blaze ripped through the former Holt Farm Primary School earlier this month and police have confirmed it was started intentionally.

The 105-year-old building has been empty since 2006 and residents say it has become a regular target for vandals.

Destroyed

Part of the roof was destroyed by fire which took more than two hours to extinguish. Flames and huge plumes of black smoke were visible for miles around.

Now Dudley Council have promised to increase security around the site to keep vandals out.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member responsible for legal and property, said: "The site belongs to the council and we are in talks with a number of developers over the future of the area, which have so far been very positive."

"In the meantime, we are assessing the extent of the damage caused by the fire and looking at ways to improve security to help prevent further incidents."

"We also ask people to be vigilant and report any problems to the police immediately."

Sinead joins the Jersey Boys



The Jersey Boys and Halesowen actress Sinead Long

A STYLISH performance from the cast of Jersey Boys launched the Birmingham leg of the hit musical's UK tour.

The quartet playing Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons took to the stage at The Jam House to run through a medley of the band's 1960s and 70s hits.

Jersey Boys follows the story of the band from the mean streets of New Jersey to international fame.

The tour features local talent, including former Halesowen schoolgirl Sinead

Long, who went to Our Lady and St Kenelm Primary and Hagley RC High School, plays more than 10 roles in the show and is looking forward to being back home for the festive period as the show is at the city's New Alexandra Theatre from December 9 until January 4.

She said: "I am so lucky to have Christmas and New Year at home, because one thing about touring is sometimes we don't feel like we have a base, so I am lucky to have a whole month with my family."



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Housing issues on agenda at meetings

PEOPLE can find out more about their communities and air their views during a series of public meetings.

Dudley Council has announced details of the latest round of tenants and residents association meetings in the borough.

The groups discuss many issues relating to their estates and discuss ideas of how they can help to make improvements.

Members of the Tanhouse group hold their annual general meeting on Thursday, October 2, at Chaucer House in Severn Road, Halesowen, at 7pm.

In Dudley, the Holly Hall TRA holds its meeting also on October 7 at Woodside Community Centre, in Highgate Road, at 7pm. The Darby End group will hold its annual general meeting the following day at Cole Street Methodist Church from 6pm. Dunnes Bank TRA will hold a meeting on the same day at the Scout Hut in Bobs Coppice Walk at 7pm.

Two meetings will be taking place on October 14. The Saltwells TRA meet at Dudley Wood Learning Centre from 7pm and the Bowling Green group meet at Saltwells Education Development Centre, Bowling Green Road, from 7.30pm.

Call (01384) 815168 to ensure the meeting is still taking place, as they may be subject to change.

DUDLEY Council is drawing up a scheme to help young people struggling to buy or rent their own home.

Dudley Council is working on the scheme after revealing 4,115 young people are being forced to stay with their parents when they would prefer their own home, because of a shortage of suitable housing.

Housing bosses say one solution to the problem is to provide a shared housing scheme to bring groups of young people under one roof, giving them the chance to live independently.

The council is already working with Midland Heart on a £5.7million plan to redevelop the Gibbs Road House hostel, making way for new 58-bed supported accommodation scheme.

The scheme will open next year and provide a place to stay for people aged between 18 and 44.

There is also support for young people looking for housing from Churches Housing Association of Dudley and District and the Black Country Housing Group.

A supported lodging scheme for people aged between 16 and 24 is run by the Black Country YMCA.

In a report to councillors, Andrea Pope-Smith, director of adult community and housing services, said: "There are no easy answers to addressing the

housing issues of young people as currently there is great demand for smaller social housing property types across a range of age groups. Some of this pressure can be attributed to welfare reform impacts."

"We are actively seeking opportunities to increase the provision of social housing in the borough by building more council homes."

Council bosses are already looking at ways to widen the type and size of houses built in the borough to bring more variety to the market, especially for first time buyers, those with bigger families and people wanting to downsize.

The authority is implementing a new housing strategy in a bid to tackle the problem by 2016 after some families claim the spare room subsidy scheme, known as the 'bedroom tax', has left them struggling.

Sneaky Peaky at red carpet premiere



Broad Street premiere – Charlotte Riley, Steven Knight, Cillian Murphy, Helen McCrory and Joe Cole

HUNDREDS turned out to cheer on stars at the world premiere of the second series of Brummie gangster epic Peaky Blinders, as its director revealed he wants to open a film studio in the Midlands.

Speaking on the red carpet at the glittering event at Cineworld on Broad Street, acclaimed writer-director Stephen Knight, who hails from Streetly, said too much talent in the region was being overlooked.

"It's silly this place is not featured

more – it's an empty vessel as far as film and TV is concerned. I want to change that," he said.

The 55-year-old was happy his main actors opted to come to Birmingham, instead of London for the gala preview of the second series, which starts on BBC2 next month.

He also spoke up for the city's much mocked accent. "I think we should liberate the accent from what most people think about it," he said.

Many of the fans were in signature

peaked caps as they cheered the actors as they arrived on the red carpet.

Irish actor Cillian Murphy, who plays the lead role of Tommy Shelby, thanked the people of Birmingham for being 'so forgiving' of his Brummie accent. He also hailed The Black Country Museum in Dudley, where many of the scenes were filmed, as 'a wonderful location'.

The second series sees the Shelby family attempt to expand their crime empire into London during the 1920s.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Free texts in bid to save NHS time

MORE than 2,500 appointments are missed by patients at Dudley's hospitals every month.

A new text reminder service has been launched to help reduce the number of missed out-patient appointments and keep waiting times down for other patients.

Bosses at Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, the Guest Outpatients Centres in Dudley and Stourbridge said 2,300 hours of clinic time was lost due to patients not attending appointments during April, May and June this year.

The text reminders will contain the date and time of the appointment as well as the location and name of the clinician that the patient is due to see.

Better access to water events

A WATER sports centre has opened changing facilities for disabled sports people thanks to a donation.

Dudley Water Sports, based at Lodge Farm Reservoir, Highbridge Road, Netherton, had the two wet rooms built last month.

They were provided by Impex Showers, which helped the centre as it marked its 50th anniversary.

The club was completely renovated earlier this year to bring the centre up to modern standards and to improve access for disabled people.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

WHEN I drove past my old school last week, the one thing that struck me was how much it had changed.

Not changed in the way that most places have in 30-odd years, but changed in the sense of its character, to an extent that it is now virtually unrecognisable.

Like many schools, much of the playing fields have been built on, with huge new extensions dwarfing the original buildings. But most noticeable of all is the steel collar of formidable-looking railings which now enclose the school grounds. About 7ft of dull, grey steel with sharp, menacing spikes. Yes, I know schools have had to up their security after the Dunblane massacre, but does it have to look quite so forbidding?

Which brings me to Redhill School in Stourbridge, which has come up with a very innovative way of making children eat their greens – by taking their fingerprints to monitor their eating habits.

To be honest, I began to feel uncomfortable when I began to read stories about children having chocolate biscuits confiscated by teachers at break time. Yes, we all know there is a problem with obesity in schools but is it really the role of teachers to become some sort of diet police?

Apparently other schools use some form of biometric system to keep tabs on the youngsters. But at a time when we constantly hear of schools complaining they are short of money, surely there are better things they could have spent £20,000 on? Like, I dunno, textbooks or chalk?

Yes, times change, and maybe the innocence of childhood is not where it was, but how did we get to the point where children spend their days surrounded by yards and yards of forbidding grey steel and are fingerprinted before they are allowed to eat their lunch. To be honest, that sounds not so much like a school to me. And more like an open prison.

On the subject of things not being what they used to be, Vauxhall has announced it is bringing back the Viva name for its new city car.

The Viva, fondly remembered by many readers as a stylish, nippy small car for drivers discerning enough to choose it over the ubiquitous Ford Escort, and sane enough to choose it over the Austin Allegro with its square steering wheel.

And it was also the last Vauxhall designed in Britain, before the company became totally absorbed into the German Opel division.

Sadly, the new Viva won't be built in Britain, it won't be designed in Britain, in fact it won't be British at all. It will simply be a reskinned Chevrolet Spark (which is really a Daewoo, built in South Korea, and sold outside Britain as the Opel Karl).

Still, makes you proud to be British, doesn't it?



Sumatran tigress Daseep by Kathryn Willett



Dudley's ever alert meerkats by Tracy Davis



Columbian black spider monkeys by Talvinder Chohan

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

THE fate of the United Kingdom rested last week in the hands of a population smaller than that of the West Midlands.

It was right that it was just the Scots who decided on their nation's future as part of a family or on its own. The question now turns to south of the border.

In a late intervention to swing the vote in favour of No, the main party leaders promised Scotland the equivalent of Home Rule. Now it's time to wonder about England.

Public spending is £8,498 per head in the West Midlands, compared to £10,152 in Scotland. To put that in perspective, if the 5,602,000 people in the West Midlands had the same spending as Scotland they would get an extra £9,265,708,000 a year.

That's about 17 rebuilds of Birmingham's New Street station paid for every 12 months.

The West Midlands has proved that it is more than capable of pulling itself up by its boot straps when the Government gives it the right tools. Take, for example, the JLR engine plant on the Wolverhampton/Staffordshire border. Councils joined forces and agreed to fund the £36.7 million slip road from the M54 motorway – a key sweetener in attracting JLR to the site – by using the business rates they will collect as a way to pay off the investment.

But too much development has relied upon going cap-in-hand to Whitehall. And how many times have the hopes been dashed because governments just would not release the cash?

But with the Scots now about to receive more power it's time we ask the question: What about us?

Ian Austin is not an MP who is afraid to speak his mind, even if it does not necessarily fit the current party line.

He has long been calling for a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU and thinks it should be held before the General Election. He also thinks there should be tough action on illegal immigration.

So far, so common sense. And with a key marginal constituency in Dudley North, Mr Austin knows that it won't just be core Labour supporters he needs to keep on side but the floating voters too.

UKIP knows this as well. But Mr Austin's opponent Bill Etheridge seems mightily miffed that the Labour MP is saying some of the same things that UKIP has and thinks he ought to switch sides.

Mr Austin, of course, dismisses the idea utterly.

It's perhaps not the best strategy by UKIP to draw attention to the fact that a Labour MP can and does support the same 'common sense' arguments as it does, while also being a member of one of the biggest parties that could form either the Government or the main opposition.

Getting snappy for zoo calendar

ALICE CHARLES gets a sneak preview of Dudley Zoological Gardens' 2015 calendar at its launch event

IF it flies, swims, purrs or squawks, then photographers from across the West Midlands have snapped it.

So when Dudley Zoological Gardens offered amateur photographers the chance to have their work displayed, hundreds jumped at the chance.

Thirteen lucky winners saw their work published in the 2015 calendar, while seven runners-up also received praise for their work. The winning pictures were selected from more than 200 entries from across the region.

The competition marked the first time the zoo had opened up the calendar to members of the public.

The calendar launch took place at a reception at the zoo's newly-installed outdoor gallery next to the tiger enclosure and was presided over by animal-mad Daniel Higgins, of Brierley Hill, who has helped raise cash for tiger conservation in the wild.

Ambassador

Daniel is a great ambassador for Dudley Zoological Gardens, he's a regular visitor, so we were delighted when he agreed to do the official ribbon cutting," said Jill Hitchman, head of media and communications at Dudley Zoo.

Daniel was presented with a life-size stuffed tiger toy as a thank you. "I love Dudley Zoo and this is my best toy ever, I'm going to put it on my bed and think of all my favourite zoo animals before I go to sleep," he said.

Six-year-old Daniel succeeded in raising more than £200 through a sponsored onesie walk. His mother Donna Lane



Animal-crazy Daniel Higgins, aged 6, of Brierley Hill, launches the new calendar

took the winning cover shot of a male Sumatran tiger. "Joao is simply beautiful, he's won my heart. This image captures his shy character as he explores his surroundings," she said.

Ms Hitchman said: "Within Dudley Zoological Gardens' 1,300-strong collection, we hold some of the most endangered animals on the planet."

"We're very privileged to share the lives of these magnificent creatures within the sanctuary that Dudley Zoological Gardens has offered since 1937. It's a passion endorsed by our loyal

supporters and that's who we asked to provide this year's calendar shots. Competition was tough and it was a difficult task as standards were very high, but in the end I whittled it down to 12 monthly images, plus a front cover and seven runners-up shots that I felt should be included," she added.

"The images offer a glimpse of the wide range of animals at Dudley Zoological Gardens," she said. "The calendars are available in the Safari Gift Shop, at £8.99, and sales are going very well."

Dudley Zoological Gardens' 40-acre site is home to a large collection of endangered species.

January's delightful image of a beautiful Sumatran tiger was taken by Kathryn Willett from Dudley. "She's the most awesome, photogenic tiger you will ever meet, it didn't take long to take the shot. I just have a bridge camera, Nikon P510," she said. "I sent three in and as Daseep is my favourite, it just made it even better. I've adopted her, I just adore her."

Becki Arnott from Lower Gornal took an arresting picture of bearded dragon Percy featured for February. Paul Cox from Kingswinford took a charming photograph of Bornean orang utan, Sprout which appears on March.

Jade Price from Cheltenham took April's beautiful picture of a Carpathian lynx. Vickie Fellows from Dudley describes herself as a "purely amateur" photographer and she took May's cheeky picture of Humboldt penguin, Peter. "I find penguins charming little characters," she said.

Talvinder Chohan from Birmingham took June's loveable picture of Columbian black spider monkeys. He said: "Within this image of Columbian black spider monkeys the same curiosity and inquisitiveness shared by all primates is reflected in a moment to which we can all relate."

July's image of ever-popular meerkats was captured by Tracy Davis from Birmingham using just her iPhone. Katie Edwards from Wombourne took a stunning picture for August of a Chilean flamingo adopting its trademark one-legged pose. Parinya Navabpour took September's image of a Sulawesi crested macaque and Karen Edwards from West Bromwich an engaging photograph of red panda, Yasmin, for October.

The picture of African spotted eagle owl, Kaiser, for November was taken by Ness Chapman of Sutton Coldfield. Steve Weaver from Rubery took December's picture of snow leopard, Nanga.

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Move for school and college to join forces

Emily's high note in
an NEC showcase



PLANS for a Stourbridge school and a sixth form college to join forces to form a multi-academy trust have been approved by the Department of Education.

The scheme will see King Edward VI College and Ridgewood High School work together and pool resources, enabling them to apply for additional funding.

A six-week consultation with students, parents, governors and staff will take place before a final decision on whether to move ahead with the scheme is made.

Sharon Phillips, principal at King Edward VI College in Lower High Street, said the option was open for other schools in the area to join forces as part of one large academy trust.

"The plan is still in its early stages and everything is pending the result of the consultation," she said.

Ridgewood's bid to back the plan follows its own unsuccessful attempt for stand-alone academy status earlier this year.

Under the new proposals, the 780-pupil school on Park Road West would become an autonomous academy within the new arrangement, operating outside of local authority control.

Headteacher Clive Nut-

ting said the move could have benefits for the school, which was rated as good in its latest Ofsted inspection.

"This is an exciting opportunity for our already successful school to work closely with a high achieving college. We don't have our own sixth form, so one potential advantage is the provision of better opportunities for our students to progress. I believe this proposal has more merit than our previous application," he said.

A consultation regarding academy status at the start of this year met with mixed views.

"It will be interesting to see what feedback we get this time around," he added.

Baggies fan Emily Badger, aged 14, will be singing in the Open Mic contest at Birmingham NEC next month

A YOUNG singer has made it through to the regional finals of a prestigious national competition. Tividale youngster Emily Badger, aged 14, will be competing in the Open Mic UK singing competition on October 4 at the NEC. The St Michael's School pupil has reached the live showcase section of the contest.

Emily, who has a place at the Birmingham Ormiston Academy on a performing arts course, has been onto the Hawthorns pitch to sing 'The Lord's My Shepherd' before a match in front of thousands of fans.

Art and photos on show

AN ART and photography exhibition is being staged at Halesowen, featuring work from people attending classes at the new Age UK Dudley centre in Brierley Hill.

The display includes watercolour paintings, acrylics and glass engravings. The exhibition is free to view.

Reality TV star's son is jailed after car crash

THE son of reality television star Paddy Doherty has been jailed for 14 months for crashing a stolen BMW into an oncoming car after a high speed police chase through the Black Country.

Martin Doherty, aged 20, was accompanied by four others when he led police on the eight-mile chase through icy streets, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The pursuit ended when Doherty crossed the central reservation on the A4123 Birmingham New Road and smashed head-on into another car, leaving its driver hospitalised and both vehicles written-off.

After the hearing, former bare-knuckle boxing champion Paddy Doherty, who starred in My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding and won Celebrity Big Brother, said his son had 'got what he deserved' after Judge Martin Walsh handed him the 14-month sentence.

Appalling

The judge told Martin Doherty he was fortunate his 'appalling' driving did not have 'catastrophic' consequences.

Police spotted the BMW t being driven erratically on the A461 at Dudley Port on December 7, 2012.

Mr Zaheer Afzal, prosecuting, said when police started to follow the car it made off at high speed, entering Priory Road and heading into Dudley town centre before rejoining Birmingham New Road in the direction of Wolverhampton.

During the hearing the court was shown dramatic footage of the chase taken from a pursuing police car, during which Doherty was said to have committed 'numerous traffic violations'.

Mr Zaheer said: 'He drove through roadworks and on the opposite side of the road towards oncoming traffic,



Jailed — Martin Doherty, 20, led police on an eight-mile car chase



Lesson — TV celebrity Paddy Doherty said his son got what he deserved

overtaking other cars at excessive speed. Throughout the entire incident his driving was extremely erratic.'

The chase ended on Birmingham New Road near the junction with Sedgley Road West when Doherty drove the BMW through a central reservation and smashed head on into a Nissan Micra driven by Ronald Gough. Mr Gough had to be cut free from the wreckage by emergency services.

He suffered multiple injuries as a result of the smash. It took him a month to make a full recovery, said Mr Afzal.

All five defendants fled the scene but were found hiding in gardens near Foxyards Primary School.

The court was told that none of the defendants were involved in the theft of the BMW, which had been stolen in October 2012 and was using false number plates.

Defending Doherty, who had been visiting friends in Dudley, Mr Adam Roxborough, said: 'His father has

taken him under his wing and is teaching him the building trade.'

Construction worker Doherty, of Riverside Caravan Park, Queensferry, Cheshire, admitted aggravated vehicle taking. He was jailed for 14 months and disqualified from driving for three years.

Paddy Doherty, 55, said: 'What he did was wrong and he has got what he deserves.'

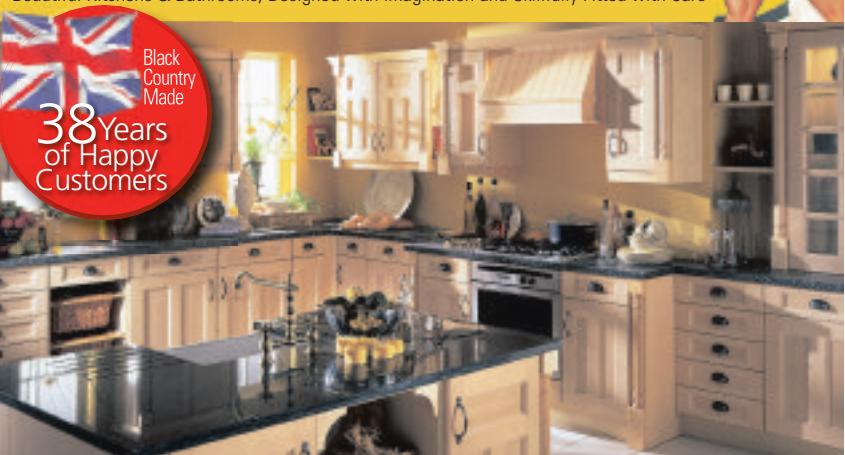
'He could be dead. I am grateful to God for giving him back to me. He has learned his lesson and these days he is out working every day and keeping away from trouble.'

The four passengers in the BMW — Daniel McDonagh, 20, of Sunnyview Road, Chester, and three 18-year-old youths — also admitted charges related to the offence and were sentenced to suspended terms in a youth offenders institution, and given orders to carry out unpaid work.

Mr Zaheer said: 'He drove through roadworks and on the opposite side of the road towards oncoming traffic,'

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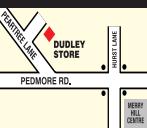
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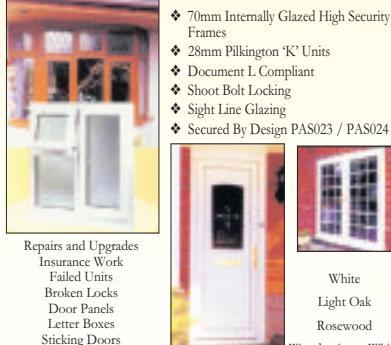
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Taxi drivers help raise £1k for hospital eye unit



Taxi boss Shaz Saleem with eye clinic staff nurse Somia Kauser after borough cab drivers helped raise £1,155

MORE than £1,000 has been raised for hospital patients by taxi drivers who swapped their cabs for the football field in a charity tournament.

Taxi drivers put their footy skills to the test as they matched up for the annual Dudley Taxi Association cup, which this year was held at The Dell Stadium, Pensnett.

Organisers wanted to raise money for a cause close to home this year and picked Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital. In total, £1,155 was raised

through the generosity of the drivers' passengers over recent weeks and the cash will be going to the eye unit at the hospital, after the drivers learned of the hard work by staff to help glaucoma patients.

Teams entered the tournament from taxi firms Express of Halesowen, Beacon of Sedgley, ABC of Dudley, Elite of Lye, Falcon of Stourbridge, Crown of Brierley Hill and A2B of Lye.

Organiser, Shaz Saleem, who is chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, said the tournament had been a real success.

"We are so grateful to our customers

who helped us raise this money," he said. "Last year we raised money for Birmingham Children's Hospital, yet this year we thought we would look to support a cause in the borough.

"We heard about the work to treat glaucoma from our customers and realised it was such a worthwhile cause."

"When we heard about all the good work done at Russells Hall Hospital we decided to raise money for them again, in the future for other departments."

Elite Taxis took the title at the six-a-side tournament beating Falcon 1-0 in the final.

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This talk will be given on

5 October 2014

at a number of locations in the Black Country.

Details of the times and locations are listed on the right.

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Philippians 4:7

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Fuzz Townshend with Kevin Birch from Halesowen and his 1968 MK1 Jensen Interceptor



The Meadows Frisky Peckmore Passenger, seen when it first came out



John Meadows with his 1958 FriskySport at the launch of the Black Country Echoes Festival in Queen Square, Wolverhampton

Revved up for celebration of Black Country with classic cars

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Now these lovingly-restored vehicles, built in West Bromwich and Wolverhampton, have taken centre stage as part of a major four-month festival celebrating the best of Black Country culture and heritage.

Until January 17, dozens of exhibitions and events will form the Black Country Echoes Festival that showcases the area's manufacturing heritage at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Cars that were built in the Black Country reminded passers-by in Queen Square, Wolverhampton, of the innovation and ingenuity of its engineers.

A 1968 Jensen Interceptor Mark

MEMORY LANE

Report by Daniel Wainwright

1, built in West Bromwich, a 1958 FriskySport from Park Lane in Wolverhampton and a Turner 950S built at the former factory in Pendeford were all on display.

Fuzz Townshend, formerly the drummer with Pop Will Eat Itself and now a presenter on Car SOS on the National Geographic Channel, said the cars were a reminder of what the British motor manufacturing trade has lost.

The 50-year-old said: "I own a Jensen myself. It's fantastic to see them here. The British motor industry declined because we got complacent. Our lives were too good and we wanted Audis and BMWs. But these cars were inspired. Jensen was the first manufacturer to have seatbelts as standard and the first to put into production a four wheel drive. The Frisky came out of the years between the Second World War and the 1960s when people needed



Ken Robbins, from Bridgnorth, with his 1959 Turner 950S – one of just 10 left cars to be cheaper, with lower taxation.” by Kevin Birch, aged 49, from Halesowen for £12,000. He took a 1,400-mile round trip to collect it from its previous owner, a British ex-pat living near Bordeaux in France.

Father of two Mr Birch said: “I have wanted one since I was five.”

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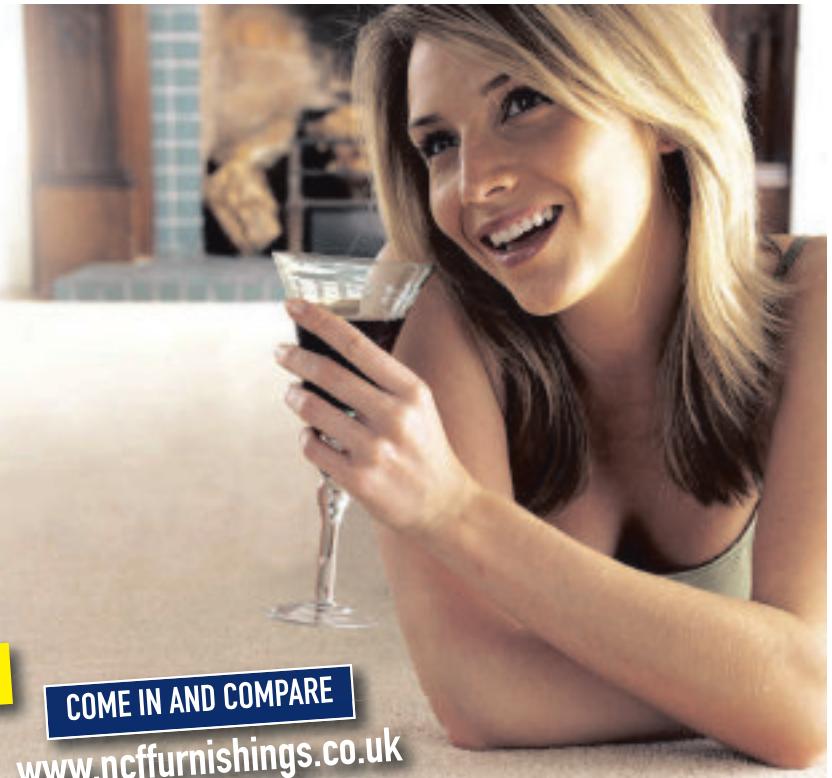
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Exhibition celebrates proud glass heritage



Mayor of Dudley Margaret Aston is seen admiring examples of the work of glass artist Georgia Redpath CRAFTED to echo the stunning pieces that Stourbridge glass makers have created for centuries, these works of art are now on display as part of a festival celebrating the industrial heritage of the Black Country.

The beautiful pieces of glass have been created over the last six months to bring together a collection, known as Objets D'Art, which will be shown at various venues around the Black Country until next year.

The exhibition has been put together for the Black Country Echoes Festival celebrating the industrial heritage

of the area and is on display at Dial Glassworks, Stewkney, Amblecote.

The exhibits have been created by four artists based at Ruskin Studios in Stourbridge; Carol Griffin, Georgia Redpath, Terri Colledge and Jo Newman. The exhibition is particularly special for Mrs Colledge, who is Black Country born and bred. The Coseley-based artist said: "It's been great to be involved with this because we have been able to look at the different ways of working, and explore the traditional methods."

The exhibition is at Dials until October 3, then moves to the Ruskin Glass Centre until January when it will be taken to Dudley Archives. See www.blackcountryechoes.org.uk website.



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New store to sell Freddie's fashion

FASHION retailers Simply Be and Jacamo were opening a new store at Merry Hill today (Thursday).

More than 1,000 people applied for just 30 jobs at the combined shop which was opening its doors to shoppers at noon.

The Merry Hill launch is part of parent group N Brown Group PLC's plans to open seven new stores before the end of the year, including one in Birmingham.

Flintoff

The 7,946 sqft store will provide a selection of men's and women's fashion. Simply Be is a young fashion collection and Jacamo offers a range of men's designer labels and own brands, including the Flintoff by Jacamo collection, designed by England cricket legend Andrew 'Freddie' Flintoff.

A FORMER UKIP MEP has appeared in court accused of a money laundering offence.

Nikki Sinclair, who lost her seat in the European Parliament earlier this year, also faces a charge of committing misconduct in a public office. Sinclair spoke only to confirm her full name, address and date of birth during a three-minute hearing at Birmingham Magistrates' Court last week.

The 45-year-old, whose lawyer said she strongly denied the allegations, was not required

to enter a formal plea to either of the charges. Sinclair, who lives in Shirley, was granted unconditional bail to appear before a judge at Birmingham Crown Court on January 7.

Sinclair was charged in July this year after a two-and-a-half-year inquiry by West Midlands Police and the European Anti-Fraud Office.

The money laundering charge, brought under the Proceeds of Crime Act, alleges that she con-

verted criminal property between October 2009 and December 2010. Prosecutors allege Sinclair committed misconduct between October 2009 and July 2010 'in that she made or caused to be made' false and dishonest claims for travelling expenses.

Her solicitor-advocate, Regan Peggs, said both "linked" charges would be denied.

Sinclair lost her seat as an MEP for the West Midlands in May's European elections after leaving UKIP and standing for the We Demand a Referendum Now party.

X Factor star to sing with choirs

X FACTOR star Lucy Spraggan will be taking to the stage with thousands of young singers in Birmingham.

The singer, who rose to fame on the television talent show, has signed up to perform alongside the Young Voices Choir this January.

Up to 6,000 young people will be taking part on the tour which comes to the LG Arena in Birmingham between January 12 and 16.

Teachers from Midlands schools can sign up to take part in the shows which organisers believe will attract more than 50,000.

Choirs range from 4,500 to 8,500 children, all performing at the same time to audiences of friends and family.

See www.youngvoices.co.uk for details.



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Nice on Cyril... Mr Cartwright with some of his awards



Quarry Bank Celtic FC with the Division 2 Cup and the Mallin Charity Cup in 1946



Quarry Bank Celtic FC won three trophies in 1947



Cyril and football VIPs including Wolves hero Stan Cullis

Cyril celebrates 70 years of service to football, both on and off the pitch

MEMORY LANE

By Charlie Benton

FOR many local club football is a pleasurable way to spend Saturday mornings but for one Brierley Hill man it has been the most important thing in life for 70 years.

From kit man to caterer 86-year-old Cyril Cartwright, a founding member of Quarry Bank Celtic back in 1944, has covered every position imaginable. West Bromwich Albion fan Cyril said: "I've been a manager, trainer, player, secretary and everything else. I drove the teams to away matches, put out refreshments and even washed the kits, although I didn't really like that job."

Whilst he occasionally took to the field, actually kicking the ball wasn't his forte. Cyril said: "I remember one time I was called up to play in a game and there was a talent scout there. I wasn't really very good at playing football and when the scout came over for a chat the lads all joked that they must have been desperate."

Cyril's skill was to be found in the administrative side of the game and as well as Quarry Bank he was also chief executive of the Midland Combination League and in recent years has been involved in the Kidderminster and District League. Cyril is involved with the running of the Dudley Metro Cup, for which he is treasurer.

Donate

He said: "We donate money to the Russells Hall Hospice and Corbett Hospital and altogether I think we've raised about £15,000."

"We are able to do it because the running costs are quite low, we get the ground for free and such, and that means we can donate more."

Quarry Bank Celtic was forced to close in 2005 but Cyril said has fond memories.

Outside of football Cyril began his working life at Blackheath goods yard in Rowley Regis and worked as a porter before moving on to work on lorries in Stourbridge.

Cyril worked as a lorry driver, a skill he put to good use driving Quarry Bank to games when necessary.

He later worked as a foreman, supervisor and in Customs and Excise before he retired at 60.

For his 40th and 50th milestones for service to football administration Cyril received commendations.

He said: "I didn't want to kick up a fuss of course I didn't really expect much but recognition is always nice."

Now, in his 70th year of service, he is still very much active in the world of local football.

He said: "I do it because I enjoy it, it has always been the most important thing in my life and always will be."

Cyril said his most difficult time in the game was when he was called to referee a women's match.

"There was talk that the match was going to be a bit heated and the original referee dropped out. I was drafted in to replace him and I've never been so scared in all my life.

"I awarded a penalty in the first five minutes which didn't go down too well and I couldn't wait to get off the pitch.

"Mind you, they gave me the man-of-the-match award, which was rather nice of them."

Cricket

Alongside his football career, Cyril said he was also vice president for Amblecote Cricket Club, and even ran as a Conservative councillor for Brierley Hill.

Despite suffering some health issues recently Cyril said he doesn't plan on slowing down.

Cyril said: "I have spent a little bit of time in hospital but when I was there there was a chap who said that he wished he could move as well as I could. I have to remind myself that there are those worse off than me."

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New role on board for tenants

A NEW board consisting of council tenants, residents and council members will replace area housing panels in Dudley after an independent review of tenant and resident involvement.

The new structure was agreed by Dudley Council and the Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association at a meeting last week.

Councillor Pete Lowe, deputy leader, said: "As a community council we are committed to engaging with local people and we know that this is what tenant and residents want. I am sure that by working together we will make sure that we provide the best possible housing service to the people of Dudley borough."

The new board will have the responsibility for allocating the safety and environment budgets as well as ensuring the council provides affordable homes and services. The current interim board will remain in place until March 31, 2015.

More staff will help at hospitals

A DOZEN new specialist health workers are to be drafted in at hospitals this winter in an attempt to reduce the number of patients left waiting in corridors with ambulance staff.

The hospital ambulance liaison staff will add to the 17 already working in the West Midlands.

Most will be based at major hospitals, including New Cross in Wolverhampton and Russells Hall in Dudley.

Paramedics

It is part of a bid by the ambulance service to reduce delays when paramedics bring patients to hospitals. During the 2013/14 financial year, paramedics wasted more than 18,000 hours waiting for a spare beds for their patients.

Hospitals have a 30 minute target to take the patient but this lapsed on 138,900 occasions during the financial year.

Hospital ambulance liaison officers were brought in to help ease the delays over the past three years, but as pressure continues to increase on the ambulance service due to increased call-outs, chief executive Anthony

Marsh has come up with a plan for 12 more over the six-month winter period.

Asked if the handover times for patients were a problem, Mr Marsh said: "Sometimes - it is not a problem every day, it is not a problem at every hospital, but it is a problem."

"It is better than it used to be and we continue to work hard with each hospital to minimise those delays because whilst the delays themselves are not the problem, the problem is the patients out there who are waiting for an ambulance that I can't send an ambulance to. Why? Because they are still in the corridor at a hospital. We work with hospitals to bring down the delays."

He said: "What we are doing is, from the additional winter funding given, we are looking to increase hospital ambulance liaison staff cover at main hospitals."

In March Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group joined The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, £74,750 for 334 ambulance handover delays. The money was re-invested into improving emergency care with the aim of reducing handover delays. The hospital trust said it is working with the ambulance service to tackle the problem.

Career highlight with no strings attached



With their puppet pals are Avenue Q stars, from left, Stephen Arden, Richard Morse and Jessica Parker

stage were two actor/puppeteers from Dudley.

CHEEKY puppets in an American show that some have described as an adults' only version of The Muppets actually had Black Country talent pulling the strings.

When brash Tony award-winning Broadway and West End comedy Avenue Q came to the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham last week on

Midlands, adding: "I get a chance not only to perform the show on home turf but in front of all of my friends and family in a packed theatre."

Performing alongside Richard was Kingswinford-born Jessica Parker, 31. She said: "I'm so thrilled. It's ticked off the last stage that I really wanted to perform on since I was little."

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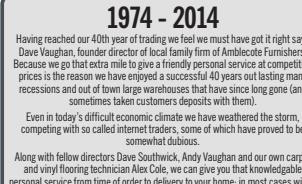
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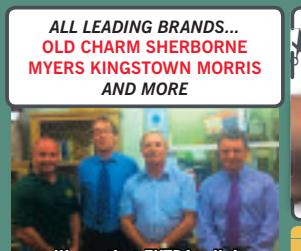
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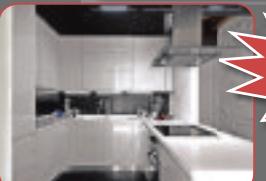
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Victorian magic lights up meeting

Coven WI

THERE was a good turnout at the September meeting. The president welcomed everyone, Jerusalem was sung, the previous minutes were read, confirmed and correspondence were read and tabled for members' information.

The Victorian evening was excellent and the meal in August at the bistro was enjoyed by those who attended.

The president welcomed Brian Morris who presented a Victorian magic lantern show. He was suitably dressed in Victorian attire and he brought along his hand operated Victorian magic lantern and a large variety of glass slides which depicted all aspects of Victorian life.

Brian, the ultimate showman, encouraged audience participation with questions and chatter; some members were delighted that it brought back memories of their childhood while attending Sunday School.

There were slides of the seaside and old bathing huts, formal family portraits, beautiful babies in large coach built prams, London scenes with trams, old bicycles of the 1800s and so much more.

Brian has been collecting slides for more than 25 years.

Refreshments followed a raffle and a sales table, with money raised going to the First Responders.

Shaun Beech from the PDSA will be the guest at the October 14 meeting, at Coven Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Ladies serve up a treat for cyclists



Some of the ladies who served refreshments for the cyclists at Bobbington Village Hall

ALTHOUGH there was no meeting in August, the club did have two events which were very enjoyable.

The first was an outing on the Churnet Valley railway, which included a cream tea. The members also enjoyed another cream tea at the Angel café in Tettenhall after taking part in a treasure hunt organised by president Sue Cotterell. Both outings were well attended giving the ladies a chance to meet up over the summer.

A couple of months earlier, committee members served refreshments at Bobbington Village Hall to hundreds of cyclists who took part in a ride to raise money for Brewood scout hut. The September meeting

was a fish and chip supper followed by a Harvest Auction. Everyone had been very generous bringing produce and other items for the table.

Clare Precey was the auctioneer and there was a lot of banter and laughter while bids were being made. The competition for an autumn arrangement was won by Rita Brown, and Mary Westwood won the raffle.

On Thursday October 9, shoeboxes will be filled for Operation Christmas Child. Meetings are at 7.30pm at the village hall.

Speaker's delightful talk

Quarry Bank E TWG

Chairwoman Vera Wright gave a warm welcome to all present at the July meeting.

The meeting progressed as usual with the reading and signing of the previous month's minutes. The treasurer's report was also given.

A letter from Compton Hospice giving thanks for the donation received via

slides showing flowers and scenes appropriate to the various seasons, and comments and pictures backed by Vivaldi's music.

She was thanked very much for her most enjoyable contribution to our meeting.

The evening concluded as usual with the serving of tea and biscuits.

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Royal Blood — dynamic duo's powerhouse rock has seen their debut top the chart

Lots of famous voices for superstar Streisand duets

LIVING legend Barbra Streisand is back with an album of all-star duets that is as classy as it is safe.

The 17 tracks on Partners include artists of the calibre of Michael Bublé, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, Andrea Bocelli and Barry Manilow. They also include duets with the dead, Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra, and I don't think these cut and paste jobs every hit home however skillfully put together.

Such is Streisand's status that several of the songs are standards that she has already put her stamp upon. These include The Way We Were, with Lionel Ritchie, Guilty with Barry Gibb and Evergreen with Babyface, the R&B hitmaker being the only one to duet twice — probably because he is Barbra's producer here.

The ones that work best are those with a contrast, such as her duet with rocker Bryan Adams on I Finally Found Someone and with the bluesy John Mayer on Come Rain Or Come Shine. And why not an all-female duet?

If your taste in female singers runs to

REVIEWS

Amy Winehouse, Katie Melua or Paloma Faith, then check out singer-songwriter Lucinda Belle, a former Robbie Williams backing singer who has made an impressive debut entitled Think Big: Like Me.

Her styles range from up-tempo 50s style popular jazz such as Nothing Left To Do But Smile to the darkly beautiful, Wicked Game-like ballad My Only Lament, co-written with Ed Harcourt.

For the real deal, I warmly recommend compilation Mid Century Minx, a primer to the more obscure female jazz singers of the 50s and early 60s for 20 gems of laid-back cocktail hour jazz. While some of these singers are reasonably well known, such as Anita O'Day, Jo Stafford and Jeri Southern, there are lots of discoveries to be made, from the smooth allure of Irene Kral to the girlish tones of Beverley Kenney. LB

This Royal Blood rock debut is exhilarating

THE self-titled debut album from Brighton duo Royal Blood is already being hailed as the rock album of the year after it shot into the album chart at no1, a rare feat for a previously unknown band.

Just a few months ago Royal Blood were third on the bill when the NME tour rolled into Birmingham but when they go back to Digbeth venue The Institute on November 4 it will be sold out.

For two musicians, drummer Ben Thatcher and singer/bassist Mike Kerr, they make a mighty big sound. Various effects make Kerr's bass sound like a wall of guitars and Thatcher's piston-like precision percussion is unrelenting.

Comparisons have been made with The White Stripes and Queens of the Stone Age, and they stand up, but there are hints also of Muse in their clattering drama and of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club in their hazy hard riffing with a blues swagger.

The Jack White/blues influence is most apparent on Figure It Out with its guitar stomp. Blood Hands and Careless takes things to a classic rock level that may persuade Led Zep fans to cock an ear (it is said that Jimmy Page is already a fan).

Royal Blood's debut is not perfect, the stop-start grunginess is sometimes repetitive, but it certainly is exhilarating and indicates a major new act on the rock scene. Leon Burakowski

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Scarecrows go to the movies

THE Belbroughton Scarecrow Festival is to return this weekend for its 19th year.

The event takes over the whole of the village and more than 100 scarecrows are expected to be displayed at the festival, which is on Saturday and Sunday. The theme for this year will be the movies' greatest heroes and villains. Money raised from the festival will be shared between charities. Organisers will also be taking food collections for the Black Country Foodbank.

The weekend is said to attract some 20,000 visitors and this year they have special guests, community choir Got 2 Sing performing at Belbroughton Recreation Centre on Saturday. The youth choir sing songs from Frozen at 12.30 and the adult choir sings at 2.30pm. See belbroughton scarecrow.co.uk for details.

TV antiques trip expert visits shop



Celebrity auctioneer Charles Hanson, left, with Phil Sims

CAMERAS from BBC TV's Antiques Road Trip arrived at The Sims Vintage Shop in Belbroughton, near Stourbridge, last week to film for an episode to be shown next year.

Phil Sims was greeted at his shop, off Stourbridge Road, by celebrity auctioneer Charles Hanson.

It comes weeks after Mr Sims made a discovery which has seen him make headlines. Five valuable pocket watches dating back to the 19th Century were found in a ginger jar more than 10 years after they went missing.

Steve Bubb had given up all hope of seeing the family heirlooms again after scouring his family home in Clent.

The 58-year-old brewery owner had handed over a large ginger jar to his friend Mr Sims to sell for £20 but luckily the antiques dealer found the treasured family watches wrapped up in newspaper inside the jar and let Mr Bubb know. It is thought his late mother may have hidden them in the jar but then forgot about them.

Mr Sims said: "BBC's Antiques Road Trip TV show filmed at our shop for about five hours and it will be televised in their next series."

Christian library invite for the public

A CHRISTIAN library in Stourbridge is extending an invitation to new visitors.

Around 4,000 books line the shelves inside the Robin Woods Library inside the New Road Methodist Church Centre, in Stourbridge. The theological and Christian education library is based at the centre on the town's ring road.

Run by a team of volunteers, the library is open to the public and includes a quiet reading area, toilets and limited parking. There is no charge for borrowing books.

Librarian and volunteer co-ordinator Jan Scott said: "The library is a valued and important community resource for everyone exploring spirituality and faith."

It was originally set up in the mid-1990s by Frances Gibson, and is one of two libraries belonging to the Worcester Diocese. In 2002 the library moved to its present location from the Robin Woods Centre, in Scotts Road, Stourbridge.

For opening hours call (01384) 376444.

Hippodrome put on national list of the theatres 'at risk'

A LANDMARK former theatre in Dudley has been placed on the Theatres Trust's list of the nation's most 'at risk' venues.

Campaigners are working on fresh plans to rescue Dudley Hippodrome in Castle Hill which has been earmarked for demolition by the council.

The annual register features theatres which under threat of the wrecking ball and redevelopment as well

as buildings that are abandoned, neglected or decaying, and those in use but at risk of closure.

It comes as The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group and events company Events that Rock have until the end of October to put forward revised proposals to re-open the building.

Dudley Hippodrome, also a former Gala Bingo hall, is one of 33 buildings on the register.

The Trust's report says: "It was well maintained while in bingo use and the

interior still has a theatrical 'feel'. Later alterations within the auditorium are fully reversible and it would be possible to return the theatre to live use."

Mhora Samuel, Director of The Theatres Trust, said: "The Theatre Buildings at Risk Register really raises awareness of the plight of many of our most threatened theatres. It makes people much more aware of the beautiful and much loved theatres that could be lost forever if action is not taken."



Dudley Hippodrome building

Oktobefest is planned at bar

A STOURBRIDGE brewery is staging a German-style Oktoberfest beer festival.

The event at the Green Duck Brewery's Badelynge Bar in Rufford Road is running from October 9 to 11.

Other breweries whose beers will be featured include Rat, Blackwater, Fixed Wheel, Two Towers and Riverhead.

Music

There will be live music each day from Bethan and the Morgans.

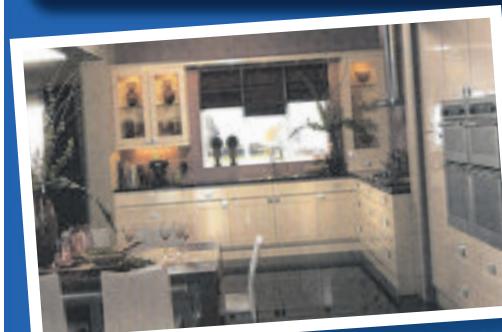
The festival, which will feature more than 16 real ales and 10 ciders, runs from 4pm to 11pm on the Thursday, and from 1pm to 11pm on the Friday and Saturday.

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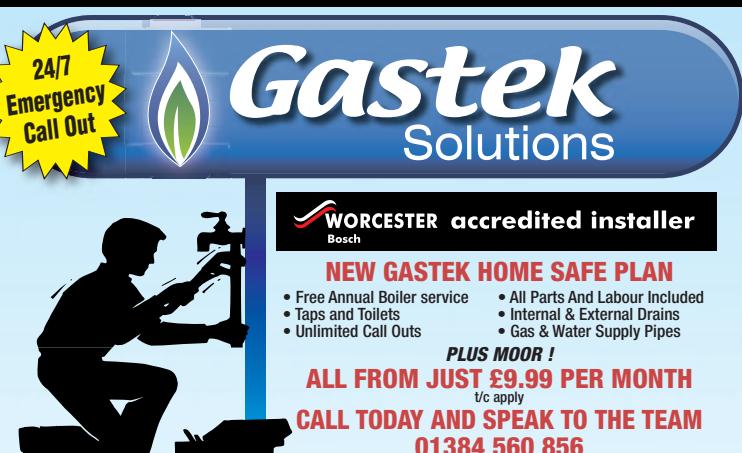
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Monkeys, Merlin and models too

Books for Teens

AN ARTICLE in a local newspaper, The Chronicle, alerts plucky teenager Zoe Marshall to strange goings-on at the local safari park and other bizarre occurrences in her Midlands town.

This is the plot for **Monkey Puzzler** (Matador, paperback, £7.99, ebook, £2.99) by West Bromwich-born author Phil Tomlinson. It marks a second book in a trilogy by the Albion fan and former youth worker now based near Coalville, following his first children's novel **The Soul Snatcher**.

But **Monkey Puzzler** can be enjoyed as a stand alone title, a science fiction thriller with echoes of Invasion of the Body Snatchers that involves the malign influence of a computer game and an alien invasion threat.

Recently voted the most popular book with older children in Dudley, **The Poison Boy** (Chicken House, paperback, £6.99) is a gothic fantasy about orphan Dalton Fly, a 'Poison Boy' who tastes food for the rich and powerful who fear they may be under threat.

When Dalton nearly dies from poisoning, and his best friend is not so lucky, he determines to find the killer with the help of the high-born girl whose life he saved. But this leads him into greater danger.

Poison Boy is an exciting, stylish thriller which won The Times Children's Fiction Competition as well as this year's Dudley Teenage Book Award.

Can a geek really be chic? That's the question for Harriet Manners in **Geek Girl: Picture Perfect** (Harper Collins, hardback, £12.99, ebook available) with the accidental model now heading for New York to take a bite out of the Big Apple fashion scene. It's the third book in the popular series aimed at



The striking cover to West Bromwich author Phil Tomlinson's **Monkey Puzzler** teenagers by Holly Smale, herself a former teenaged model with a BA in English Literature from Bristol University.

The Young Knights travel to San Francisco in a bid to persuade the wizard Merlin to join their cause but find the magic man has reinvented himself as a digital entrepreneur and isn't so keen to help them create a new Round Table. Meanwhile, King Oberon plots a final assault on Earth with his Fey army.

The Young Knights are a kind of Arthurian Percy Jackson, having fun blending myth with the modern age, and young fans will delight in this final part of Julia Golding's trilogy. **Young Knights: Merlin** (Oxford University Press, paperback, £6.99, ebook available) is a sequel to **Young Knights of the Round Table** and **Pendragon** by the Oxford-based former diplomat.

Leon Burakowski

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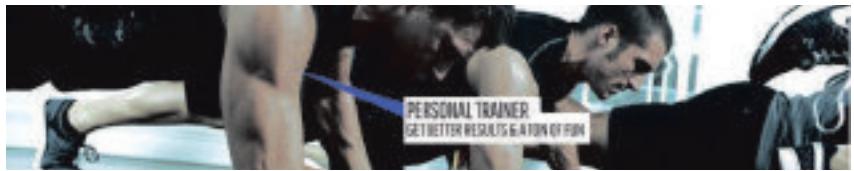
To ensure the equipment is used safely and effectively, all new members are offered a free induction.

For fitness fans preferring to work out in a group, there are 40 fitness classes to select from including the latest world-class Les Mills programmes including BODYPUMP, GRIT (small group training), CXWORX, RPM and BODYCOMBAT. MegaGym also hosts the famous BeachBody Insanity and Zumba classes. All classes take place in a purpose-built, air conditioned studio.

Gym manager Dave Cross said: "To provide affordable fitness in a relaxed and social atmosphere, we've avoided the gimmicks whilst giving you the best quality service and value for your money. Our prices start at £14.99 and there's also a choice of contract or flexible membership."

MegaGym has a 120 space car park with CCTV and men's and women's changing rooms with power showers, toilets and lockers. There is also a changing and shower facility accessible during the night and into the early hours.

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Review

Ian Pittaway & Billie Spakemon
Newhampton Folk Club
THE autumn season of the Newhampton Folk Club kicked off with two very different acts sharing the bill upstairs in the Newhampton Inn, Whitmore Reans.

Billie Spakemon, a story-teller and singer from Oldbury, is passionate about the Black Country dialect — so much so he has a PhD in it and speaks at international conferences.

When you get someone such as Spakemon who is proud of the local tongue, it takes on a new life and a kind of magic happens where you reconnect to terms such 'jed', meaning dead, and 'tittle', food. His stories and songs covered murder, wife selling, love, courtship and parenthood.

In contrast was Ian Pittaway who specialises in mediaeval and renaissance music which he plays on two beautifully crafted lutes. The music he expertly plays are as authentic as you can get without a time machine to take you back to the 16th century.

His gentle and precise skill on the instruments — he plays guitar too — is impressive to watch. The sound he produces is the sort of music which the likes of Shakespeare would have listened to.

Both performances were unplugged which meant they were fighting against the sound of the Oxfam festival going on downstairs in the pub, and while it didn't spoil the show, the loud music was intrusive.

Danny Farragher

It's no longer a labour of love as brothers row over UB40 name

You'll want more of this show

ONE of the best loved musicals is returning to Wolverhampton next month. Lionel Bart's Oliver! is based on the classic novel by Charles Dickens about the adventures of orphan Oliver Twist in 19th century London.

Oliver! is staged at the Grand Theatre from October 14 to 18 in a production by South Staffs' Musical Theatre Company. It features such memorable songs as Food Glorious Food, Consider Yourself, As Long As He Needs Me and I'd Do Anything.

Mike Thomas, of Al-brighton, will play Fagin while James Collins, a teacher at Smeestow School, plays nasty Bill Sykes. Office worker Lexie Bennett, of Upper Gornal, makes her company debut as Nancy. The title role will be shared by James Shaw, aged nine, from Brewood, and 12-year-old Ben Sidaway, of Stourport. Call the box office on 01902 429212.



Lexie Bennett as Nancy and James Collins as Bill Sykes with his dog Bullseye

Ali Campbell and brother Duncan are the Cain and Abel of reggae.

Both front bands called UB40. Confused? You should be. So's Ali — and he helped create the band and sang with them for more than 30 years, selling 70 million records including hits like Kingston Town and Red, Red Wine, among many others.

Trouble is, there are now two bands using the name UB40. There's Ali, Mickey and Astro, then there's the rest of the guys.

Following a sold out gig at Birmingham O2 Academy on December 19, Ali's UB40 will line up at Birmingham's NIA on April 17 next year — though they might have changed their name by then.

He said: "The thing is, there's a lot of confusion and we want to clear it up.

Legendary

"When me, Astro and Mikey go out, I make sure the fans know they are coming to see me. We call the show The Legendary Voice of UB40, or Ali Campbell's UB40."

"The other guys are accusing me of 'passing off', which means I'm pretending to be UB40. But I'm the one who started the band. I think it's hilarious."

The matter is heading to court and Ali's been served with a writ, urging him to cease and desist from using the name UB40.

"I was forced into leaving because of all sorts of issues. I'd had enough. The next



Ali Campbell — on the road

thing I know my brother, Duncan, has joined the band. It's proper Cain and Abel stuff. I haven't spoken to any of them. It stresses me out."

There are, of course, two sides to every story and 'the other' UB40 have pinned the blame on Ali.

Meanwhile Ali's doing what he does best, he's taking to the road to sing.

"This year, we're off to Australia, New Zealand, Africa, India and the USA. We don't want anything to stop us," he said.

Andy Richardson

Wouldn't it be good to see Nik?

PRIME gigs this week include 1980s hit-maker Nik Kershaw at Bilston's Robin 2 tonight and American singer-songwriter James Taylor at the LG Arena tomorrow.

Steve Craddock of Birmingham's Ocean Colour Scene is at Wolverhampton venue The Slade Rooms on Saturday, same night as The Busbys' charity bash at Robin 2. Mancunians 1975 have sold out their Wolverhampton Civic gig on Monday, the same night The Horrors play The Institute in Digbeth.

The highly-rated Nell Bryden, last seen in Wolverhampton supporting Gary Barlow, is at the Robin 2 on Wednesday, the same night The Sunshine Underground play the Slade Rooms.

Comedy nights at city venues

IT is comedy all the way in Wolverhampton over the next week. Dave Gorman brings his Work In Progress to the Slade Rooms for two nights, on Monday and Tuesday, then one of Ireland's favourite comics, Tommy Tiernan, on Thursday, October 2.

Also coming up at the same venue are radical comic Andy Zaltzman on Saturday, October 4, and Edinburgh Festival success Peter Johansson on October 9.

Meanwhile, Michael Palin will be talking about Python and his globe-trotting adventures in Travelling To Work at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre on Tuesday.

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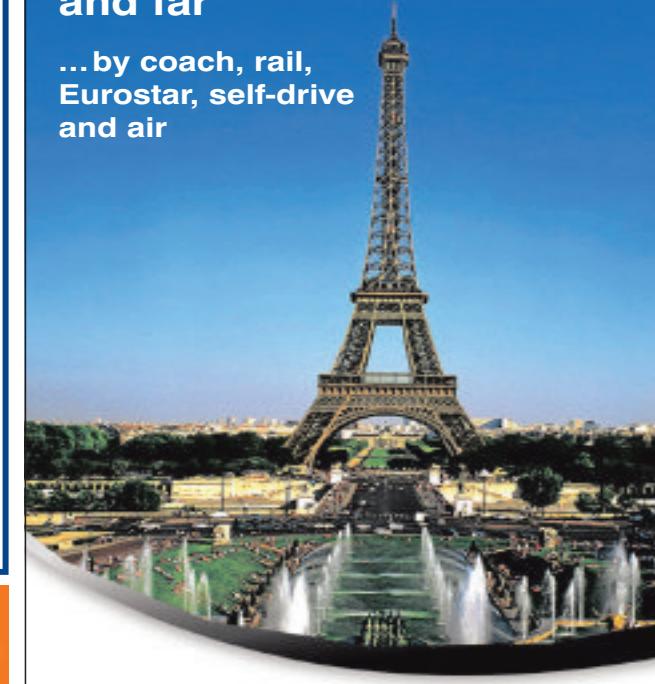
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BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** 7.30 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 Sunday Morning Live. 11.00 Sunday Politics. 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. Analysis of yesterday's Premier League matches. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.25 Escape to the Country. 3.15 The Great British Bake Off. (R) 4.15 Points of View. 4.30 Songs of Praise. 5.10 Deadly on a Mission: Pole to Pole. 5.40 Pointless Celebrities. (R)
- 6.30 BBC News:** Regional News; Weather.
- 7.00 Countryfile.** For the second year running, Countryfile plays host to One Man and His Dog, the contest showcasing the skills and traditions of sheepdog training and handling. Matt Baker and Helen Skelton present the action from Byland Abbey in the North York Moors, as handlers representing England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales compete to become the 2014 champions. Between rounds, Helen explores the hills around the abbey, whose monks used to be at the heart of Britain's wool trade, and discovers how nearby Ampleforth Abbey is still going strong. But rather than raising sheep, the monks are now selling cider. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.
- 8.00 Antiques Roadshow.** A return visit to Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire, where items include Art Deco enamel, a toy football team, a stuffed dog, a Venetian drug jar and an elaborate carved chair.
- 9.00 Our Girl.** Molly strikes up a friendship with a young Afghan girl, in spite of Capt James' warnings against becoming too involved with the locals, threatening her ability to remain impartial.
- 10.00 BBC News:** Regional News; Weather.
- 10.30 Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman presents highlights of the Premier League match at the Hawthorns, where West Bromwich Albion welcomed Burnley.
- 11.20 Film: Flightplan.** (2005) A woman on board a flight with her daughter wakes up to find the girl has disappeared – but no one else remembers having seen her. Thriller, with Jodie Foster and Peter Sarsgaard.
- 12.50 Weather for the Week Ahead.**
- 12.55 BBC News.**

BBC2

- 6.00 Countryfile.** (R) 7.00 Great British Garden Revival. (R) 8.00 Gardeners' World. (R) 8.30 The Beechgrove Garden. 9.00 The Football League Show. (R) 10.20 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.50 Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook. (R) 7.20 Rick Stein's Mediterranean Escapes. (R) 1.20 Live Cycling: Road World Championships. The men's road race. 4.00 Canoe Slalom: World Championship Highlights. 5.30 Rugby League: Super League Play-Offs. 6.30 Jungle Atlantis. A thousand years ago, the Khmer people of Cambodia built an empire and their capital was the great city of Angkor, with its centrepiece being Angkor Wat – a vast temple complex covering an area more than four times the size of the Vatican City. In the first of this two-part programme, an international team of archaeologists and scientists use revolutionary technology to reveal the true scale and extent of the lost metropolis and find out how its people lived and died. (R)
- 7.30 Golf: The Ryder Cup.** Hazel Irvine presents highlights of the third day from the Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire, where the 40th staging of the biennial contest between teams from the USA and Europe concluded with the singles matches. With commentary and analysis by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown, Andrew Cotter, Mark James, Phil Parkin, Maureen Madill, Scott Drummond, Rishi Persad and Russell Fuller.
- 9.00 Mock the Week.** Rob Beckett, Milton Jones, Romesh Ranganathan and Holly Walsh join regular panelists Hugh Dennis and Andy Parsons on the topical comedy quiz. Dara Ó Briain hosts. (R)
- 10.00 Film: Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll.** (2009) Premiere. Biopic of punk singer Ian Dury, focusing on the impact his rise to fame and volatile personality had on his relationship with his son. With Andy Serkis and Bill Milner.
- 11.55 Film: The Children.** (2008) A family Christmas at a remote cottage turns deadly when a virus transforms the children into bloodthirsty killers. Horror, starring Eva Birthistle and Stephen Campbell Moore.
- 1.15 Sign Zone: Countryfile.** (R) 2.10 Holby City. (R) 3.10 This is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00 CITV:** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. 6.25 Pat & Stan. (R) 6.35 Pat & Stan. (R) 6.40 Dino Dan. (R) 6.50 Dino Dan. (R) 7.05 Cannimals. (R) 7.10 Cannimals. (R) 7.20 Om Nom Stories. (R) 7.25 Sooty. (R) 7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Ultimate Spider-Man. 8.20 Nerds & Monsters. (R) 8.30 Big Time Rush. 9.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! 9.25 ITV News. 9.30 Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) 10.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 11.25 ITV News; Weather. 11.35 Film: Carry On Girls. (1973) 1.15 Film: Hatch Lives. (1989) Comedy, starring Chevy Chase. 3.00 The X Factor. (R) 4.15 DownTown Abbey. (R) 5.45 All Star Family Fortunes. (R)
- 6.35 Regional Programme:** Weather. 6.45 ITV News; Weather.
- 7.00 Sunday Night at the Palladium.** Jack Whitehall hosts the variety show, with Lionel Richie, the Script, dance act Duplic8, comedy duo the Umbilical Brothers and a preview of the new Made in Dagenham musical.
- 8.00 The X Factor.** As the boot-camp triple bill concludes, the 24 remaining acts know they have to raise their game to stand out at the forthcoming judges' houses stage of the competition.
- 9.00 Downton Abbey.** A bombshell was dropped in last week's edition, and it's clear as this episode begins that the household, both upstairs and down, is still coming to terms with what has happened – and it falls on Robert's broad shoulders to make what could be a far-reaching decision about the situation. Rose, meanwhile, seems more concerned with persuading him to buy a wireless than what is happening to those around her – but then again, she's always been trapped in her own self-centred little world. In the kitchen, Mrs Patmore thinks she may have found a way to help Daisy cope with her studies, while Thomas' devious ways look set to scupper Baxter's friendship with Moseley.
- 10.05 ITV News;** Weather.
- 10.20 I Married the Waiter: Love in the Sun.** Stories of British women whose holiday romances ended long after they returned home to the UK. (R)
- 11.15 Premiership Rugby Union.**
- 12.10 The Store.** 2.30 Motorsport UK. 3.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 4.05 ITV News; Weather. 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.15 British F3.** (R) 6.40 British F3. 7.05 Ironman Wales. 7.35 NFL: The American Football Show. (R) 8.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch. 12.30 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) 1.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 2.25 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 2.55 Film: She's the Man. (2006) Romantic comedy, starring Amanda Bynes and Channing Tatum. 5.00 Channel 4 News. 5.30 American Football Live at Wembley. Oakland Raiders v Miami Dolphins (Kick-off 6.00pm).
- 8.00 Operation Maneater.** Mark Evans travels to the shores of Hudson Bay in Canada, where polar bears are causing havoc in isolated communities. He arrives in the town of Churchill just hours after an attack has left two people seriously injured and one of the animals dead. Here, he joins an alert team transporting a captured bear by helicopter to a desolate release point outside the small town of Aviatic. He works with wildlife officers to test an aerial drone early warning system, a military-grade loud speaker deterrent and a controversial experiment to place meat out on the tundra to divert these predators away from locals.
- 9.00 Film: Magic Mike.** (2012) Premiere. A male stripper who is the star attraction in a nightclub teaches a talented young dancer the tricks of the trade, while also introducing him to his hedonistic world. The veteran performer falls for his protege's sister, but finds his wild lifestyle comes between them. Steven Soderbergh's comedy drama, with Channing Tatum, Matthew McConaughey, Olivia Munn and Alex Pettyfer.
- 11.15 Film: Indecent Proposal.** (1993) A penniless couple accept \$1 million for the wife to sleep with a billionaire, but their marriage suffers as a result. Drama, starring Robert Redford, Demi Moore and Woody Harrelson.
- 1.20 American Football Live.** Dallas Cowboys v New Orleans Saints (Kick-off 1.30am). Nat Combs is joined by Mike Carlson to present coverage of the match from AT & T Stadium. 5.00 Ironman Wales. Highlights of the race in Pembrokeshire. (R) 5.25 Win It Cook It. Hosted by Simon Rimmer. (R) 5.55 Deal or No Deal. Players try to beat the banker and guess the contents of mystery boxes. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 Milkshake!** Peppa Pig. 6.05 Roary the Racing Car. (R) 6.15 Angelina Ballerina. (R) 6.30 Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) 6.35 Seaside Antics. 6.40 The Mr Men Show. (R) 6.55 Chloe's Closet. (R) 7.05 Oily the Little White Van. 7.10 Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) 7.25 Make Way for Noddy. (R) 7.35 City of Friends. (R) 7.55 Little Princess. 8.10 The Adventures of Bottles Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) 8.20 Wanda and the Alien. 8.35 Rupert Bear. (R) 8.50 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (H) 9.10 Jelly Jamm. (R) 9.25 LazyTown. (R) 9.45 Access. 10.00 Police Interceptors. (R) 10.55 Police Interceptors. (R) 11.50 Police Interceptors. (R) 12.45 Extreme Police Interceptors. (R) 1.45 Film: Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. (2009) Animated comedy, with the voice of Bill Hader. 3.30 Film: Homebound Round II: Lost in San Francisco. (1996) Animal adventure sequel, with the voice of Michael J. Fox. 5.10 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop. (2009) Comedy, starring Kevin James. 7.05 5 News Weekend. 7.10 Film: 10,000 BC. (2008) In prehistoric times, a young man must hunt, brave combat, fend off creatures as he journeys across the wilderness to rescue his captive lover and her fellow villagers from brutal slave raiders. Roland Emmerich's fantasy adventure, starring Steven Strait, Camilla Belle, Cliff Curtis and Joel Vrabel.
- 9.00 Film: Gone in 60 Seconds.** (2000) A veteran car thief is forced out of retirement to steal top-of-the-range vehicles in exchange for his brother's life. While his sibling is held hostage by a sadistic gangster, he asks his former cronies to help – but with the clock ticking and just a few days remaining to pull off the daunting task, their chances of success are hanging by a thread. Thriller, starring Nicolas Cage, Angelina Jolie and Robert Duvall. Part of the Legend of Cage night.
- 11.15 Film: Bangkok Dangerous.** (2008) A hitman in Thailand questions his way of life, while his employer plots to have him killed when his work is done. Action thriller remake, with Nicolas Cage and Shah Rukh Yannarn. Part of the Legend of Cage night.
- 1.20 American Football Live.** Dallas Cowboys v New Orleans Saints (Kick-off 1.30am). Nat Combs is joined by Mike Carlson to present coverage of the match from AT & T Stadium. 5.00 Ironman Wales. Highlights of the race in Pembrokeshire. (R) 5.25 Win It Cook It. Hosted by Simon Rimmer. (R) 5.55 Deal or No Deal. Players try to beat the banker and guess the contents of mystery boxes. (R)
- 12.55 SuperCasino.** 3.10 The Gadget Show. (R) 4.00 House Doctor. (R) 4.25 Make It Big. (R) 5.20 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.40 Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

- BBC Three**
- 7.00 Pop's Greatest Dance Crazes 7.05 Great Movie Mistakes IV: May the Fourth Be with You 7.50 Doctor Who 8.35 Film: Kung Fu Panda (2008) 10.00 Family Guy 10.45 Bad Education 11.15 American Dad! 12.00 Film: Anuvahood (2011) 1.25 The Truth About Skunk 2.25 Bad Education 2.55 Parents' Evening 3.20 Bad Education 3.50 Close
- BBC Four**
- 7.00 The World's Most Beautiful Eggs: The Genius of Carl Fabergé 8.00 Byzantium: A Tale of Three Cities 8.00 British Art at War: Bomberg, Sickert and Nash 8.00 Film: The Body (2012) 11.45 Queen: The Legendary 1975 Concert 12.30 Film: Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (1973) 2.00 TOP2P 2.45 British Art at War: Bomberg, Sickert and Nash 3.45 Close
- ITV2**
- 12.25 The X Factor 1.40 The Xtra Factor 2.15 You've Been Framed! 2.45 Film: Jimmy McGee and the Big Bang! (2010) 4.45 Film: Despicable Me (2010) 6.50 Film: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) 9.00 The Xtra Factor 10.00 Bad Bridesmaid 11.00 Tricked 12.00 The X Factor 1.05 The Xtra Factor 2.00 and a Half Men 2.45 TeleShopping 5.45 ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

- 11.15 Inspector Morse 1.55 Wyldlife 3.00 Film: Carry On That Camel (1967) 5.05 Film: Columbo: Murder with Too Many Notes 2000 7.12 Lewis 9.00 The Best of the Royal Variety 9.00 Film: Gostin Park (2001) 12.50 William and Mary 2.40 Judge Judy 3.00 ITV3 Nightscreen 3.15 Emmerdale
- ITV4**
- 11.00 Live British Touring Car Championship. The ninth round of the season from Silverstone. 6.30 BRDC Formula 4 Championships Highlights 7.30 Storage Wars 8.00 Premiership Rugby Union 9.00 Film: The Game (1997) 11.40 Hell on Wheels 12.35 River Monsters 1.35 Breakout 2.35 Motorway Patrol 3.00 TeleShopping
- E4**
- 12.30 How I Met Your Mother 2.00 Melissa & Joey 3.00 Suburbia 3.30 New Girl 4.00 The Big Bang Theory 5.00 The 100 6.00 2 Broke Girls 7.00 The Big Bang Theory 8.00 Film: The Karate Kid (2010) 10.45 The Big Bang Theory 11.10 Glue 12.15 Rules of Engagement 1.15 Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful 2.20 The Ricky Gervais Show 2.45 The Cleveland Show 3.10 Hollyoaks
- Film4**
- 11.00 Blossoms in the Dust (1941) 1.00 Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (1991) 3.05 Mad Money (2008) 5.10 Romancing the Stone (1984) 7.15 Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer (2007) 9.00 Die Hard 2 (1990) 11.20 Ned's (2010) 1.40 Cop Land (1997) 3.50 Close

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Frozen shoulder treatment : after first treatment

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

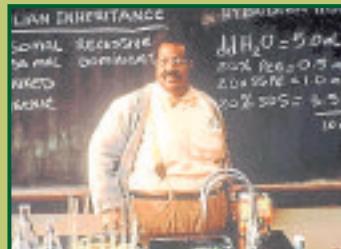
The Terminator, Channel 5, 10.55pm

A cyborg assassin is sent on a murderous mission back in time to the 20th century, where he wreaks havoc while searching for his intended victim – a woman whose unborn son is destined to lead the human race in a war against machines. However, a soldier has also been sent from the future to protect her. James Cameron's sci-fi thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton and Michael Biehn. (1984)

TUESDAY

Honeymoon in Vegas, BBC1, 11.35pm

A private detective faces a desperate race against time to win back his fiancée after using her as a betting stake in a card game, which he lost to an expert player. Andrew Bergman's romantic comedy, starring Nicolas Cage, Sarah Jessica Parker, James Caan, Johnny Williams, Anne Bancroft and Peter Boyle. (1992)



The Nutty Professor, Friday, ITV, 11.10pm

WEDNESDAY

They Come Back, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A psychologist takes on the case of an orphaned girl whose parents were killed in a car crash. As she treats the withdrawn child, she begins to suspect her patient is not merely traumatised by her loss, but is being haunted by the ghosts of her parents. Supernatural drama, starring Mia Kirshner and Niamh Wilson. (2007)

THURSDAY

Love Will Keep Us Together, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A man is left devastated after the death of his wife and puts his career on hold so he can devote himself to looking after their children. The youngsters have never had a particularly close bond with him, but through the hardships that come and go they grow closer together as a family. Drama, with David James Elliott and Sharon Case. (2010)

FRIDAY

The Nutty Professor, ITV, 11.10pm

An obese, terminally shy professor invents a potion that transforms him into a slim, loud-mouthed charmer. His new streamlined self immediately sets out to woo the woman of his dreams – but soon starts to ride roughshod over everything he used to care about. Remake of the 1963 Jerry Lewis comedy, starring Eddie Murphy, Jada Pinkett Smith and Larry Miller. (1996)

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PICK OF THE WEEK

Thomas returns to expand his empire

Razor blades hidden in caps, danger around every corner and dastardly goings-on in Birmingham – that's the stuff that drama is made of.

Peaky Blinders arrived in a blaze of publicity last year, and with good reason – it's not every day that Hollywood stars of the calibre of Cillian Murphy and Sam Neill agree to appear on BBC Two. Not that this is a cheaply made affair – far from it in fact.

As well as a great script from Steven Knight, writer of the screenplays for Eastern Promises and Dirty Pretty Things, and wonderful performances, the production design also helps transform the tale into something very special indeed – heaps of post-First World War Midlands, and it often feels like a very foreboding world indeed.

The first series was a big success, so it came as no surprise when a second was commissioned.

Knight was particularly thrilled, because the idea for the series came

from shadow tales he heard from elderly members of his family.

"I am so pleased we will be able to continue to tell this story of a working class family living through extraordinary times in an extraordinary way. The Peaky Blinders will march on to many surprising places and fight astonishing battles as the 1920s begin to roar."

Another big star is set to make an appearance in series two – Tom Hardy.

Last year he starred in Locke, an inventive film written and directed by Knight set entirely inside a car. He's also well-known to Murphy – the pair appeared in The Dark Knight Rises, the final film in director Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy. Now they're back on screen again, pitting their wits against each other.

Murphy was chillingly believable in the first run as Thomas Shelby, head of a criminal family, while Hardy joins the cast as Thomas's arch enemy from way back.

The action now takes place in the Roaring Twenties, with Thomas

determined to develop the Shelby businesses, both legally and illegally, in new territories. But when we meet up with him again, a blast from the past is all set to put a spanner in the works...

"It's classic crime family stuff," says the Irish actor. "But whatever the shift in power or that push and pull is, the family is unbelievably tight."

They also look startlingly similar thanks to their severe short-back-and-sides haircut – we're talking about the men only, of course – which makes them appear threatening in real life.

"The look thing was very important," explains Murphy. "There was a real peaky blinders gang that existed, and they were far more vicious and brutal than the gang that we are depicting. However, it was necessary that they controlled this part of Birmingham, so they instil a fear and respect in people, so we need to look tough. So for a load of fey actors, it was important to get the look right."

They certainly do look right – and should add to the menace this time around too.



Cillian Murphy heads the cast of Peaky Blinders, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

New Tricks
BBC1, 9pm

The arrest of a Turkish girl who has been working illegally leads Ucos to reopen the case of Richard Gibson, a pub landlord who died in a fire in 2009. The original investigation concluded Gibson's death was probably suicide due to his dire financial situation, but the detectives have some questions about the pub's live-in barmaid, who disappeared on the night of the blaze. Could widowed landlady Joanna, pub regular Jason, or the dead man's best friend David, who happens to have a sideline in passing off his British-produced sparkling wine as French champagne, supply them with any answers? While the case tests the team's brain power, Sasha is also keen to raise their fitness levels as she signs them up for a five-a-side football competition. Phil Davis, Niamh Cusack and Tom Georgeson guest star.

Cilla

ITV, 9pm

It looks like Cilla has put that early botched audition and those disappointing record sales behind her as, following the success of Anyone Who Had a Heart, her new single You're My World becomes her second number one. However, while she may have conquered the UK charts, can she follow in the footsteps of her old mates the Beatles and crack

America? The signs aren't looking good, and just to add to the pressure, her relationship with Bobby is becoming increasingly tumultuous. But as her manager Brian Epstein's private life starts to spiral out of control, it seems there could be an even bigger threat to Cilla's new-found success. The concluding instalment of Jeff Pope's biopic charting Cilla Black's rise to fame, starring Sheridan Smith, Aneurin Barnard and Ed Stoppard. Last in the series.

TUESDAY

The Driver
BBC1, 9pm

The crime drama continues, as Vince realises just how far out of his depth he has gotten since agreeing to be the driver for gang leader The Horse. He nurses a guilty conscience as his thoughts turn to his involvement in the last job and so sets about trying to make things right – although little does he realise his actions are going to impact on Col. Meanwhile, Ros is becoming increasingly suspicious of what her husband is getting up to in his spare time, and it looks like Vince's two worlds may be about to collide. Feeling at a loss, he tries to piece his family back together by visiting his son

Tim and making an emotional plea. David Morrissey, Clémence Poésy, Ian Hart and Lewis Rainer star.

WEDNESDAY

This World: Rwanda's Untold Story
BBC2, 9pm

Twenty years on from the Rwandan genocide, Jane Corbin examines evidence that challenges the accepted story of one of the most horrifying events of the late 20th century. The country's president Paul Kagame has long been portrayed as the man who brought an end to the killing and rescued his country from oblivion, but there are increasing questions about the role of his Rwandan Patriotic Front forces in the dark days of 1994 and in the years since. The film investigates the shooting down of the presidential plane that sparked the killings in 1994, questions Kagame's claims to have ended the genocide and examines allegations of war crimes committed by his forces and their allies.



Who Do You Think You Are?, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY

Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 9pm

Some great names have featured in the series so far, but their ancestors' lives haven't always been as intriguing as those of lesser celebrities who've taken part in previous runs. At least with this week's famous face – comedian and actor Billy Connolly – we're guaranteed more than our fair share of laughs, even if his family history turns out to be lacklustre. The episode starts out promisingly in the city of Billy's birth, Glasgow, where he hopes to find out more about his mother's relatives. He believes they hailed from Ireland, but records concerning his great-great-grandmother only deepen the mystery.

FRIDAY

Tom Kerridge's: Best Ever Dishes
BBC2, 9pm

New series. The double Michelin-starred chef creates new versions of some of Britain's favourite recipes, elevating everyday, ordinary food with his impressive flair. In the first episode, Tom focuses on crowd-pleasing dishes, perfect for sharing at a party, including crispy stuffed potato skins with Roquefort and pancetta, pulled beef brisket with garlic coleslaw, and barbecued mackerel. He finishes off with an indulgent chocolate tart.

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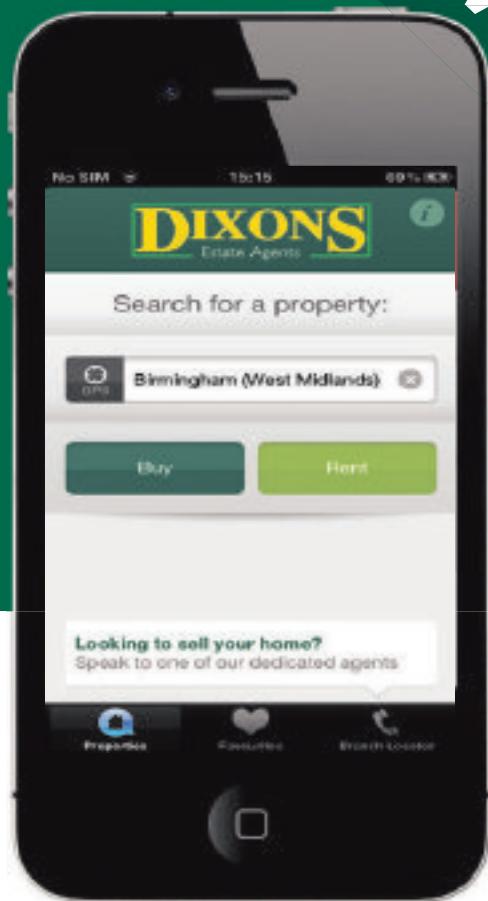
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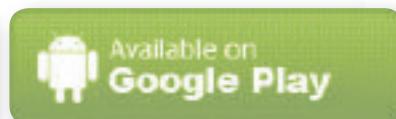
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HALESOWEN, Hagley Road £825 pcm - Fees An unfurnished detached house within close proximity of Halesowen. Briefly comprising Of: 3 Bedrooms, large lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with separate w.c., driveway parking & garage, double glazing, gas central heating (new boiler) EPC: D



NEW
HALESOWEN, Banners Lane £775 pcm - Fees An unfurnished 3 bedroom detached family home with gas central heating and off road parking for 3 cars. This great property has entrance porch, hallway with Minton tiled floor, front lounge, modern good size kitchen with French doors leading to the conservatory, utility room, 3 bedrooms and a family bathroom with shower. To the front of the property is off road parking and to the rear a large private garden with raised decking area. EPC: D



NEW
STOURBRIDGE, Crystal Gardens £775 pcm - Fees A fantastic opportunity to rent a new build home on a select development 'Crystal Gardens' features homes of 3 generous size bedrooms (master with en-suite) finished to an exceptional standard. Featuring spacious lounge/dining areas, well appointed kitchens, downstairs WC, 3 bedrooms with family bathrooms & master bedroom with en-suite. 2 allocated parking spaces, front & rear gardens. These homes will not be available for long. EPC: B



WITHYMOOR, Alderford Drive £725 pcm - Fees Well presented semi-detached house situated in a popular estate. Occupying a quiet cul de sac location. Features entrance hall, attractive lounge with beautiful kitchen with Belfast sink, conservatory, rear garden. To the 1st floor there are 3 bedrooms and a family bathroom, garage with electronic doors and driveway, central heating and double glazing. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Newfield Crescent £750 pcm - Fees Stunning large 3 bedroom semi-detached in this very popular location, close to town centre and schools. Front lounge, large open plan kitchen with island, dining & living area leading to patio doors and back garden. Downstairs shower room/utility area, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite and dressing area, 1 single bedroom, house bathroom with large jacuzzi bath. EPC: TBC



NEW
HALESOWEN, Brodes Close £695 pcm - Fees An unfurnished detached house in a very quiet cul-de-sac location. This property features 4 bedrooms, 2 of which have en-suites, through lounge/dining area, fitted breakfast kitchen, downstairs wc. This property also benefits from a garage and driveway parking, rear garden with views. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Spring Vale Road £695 pcm - Fees An opportunity to acquire a well maintained traditional three bedroom detached property situated in a popular residential location in a quiet cul-de-sac, close to local schools, amenities and motorways. Features large living room, fitted kitchen with a double range cooker, downstairs w.c. 2 double & 1 single bedroom/study. Bathroom with shower, driveway/garage. A lovely property not to be missed. EPC: TBC



NEW PRICE
ROWLEY REGIS, Queens Drive £650 pcm - Fees Fully refurbished 3 bedroom semi-detached house in a popular location. The property features a welcoming entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, fitted kitchen, brand new bathroom with shower, off road parking for 2 vehicles, rear garden, gas central heating, double glazing. EPC: TBC



ROWLEY REGIS, Bryan Budd Close £650 pcm - Fees A fully refurbished 3 bedroom semi-detached house, ideally situated for M5 and Balsall Heath Town Centre. This lovely semi-detached house features a lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, patio doors to rear garden, 2 double & 1 single bedroom, family bathroom, driveway parking. Viewing essential. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Wesley Close £650 pcm - Fees Deceptively spacious 3 bedroom modern house ideal for Old Hill train station, shops and bus links. This beautiful house features a lounge/dining area, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, master en-suite, family bathroom, garden, driveway & garage to front. Available immediately. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Haden Arch Court £575 pcm - Fees Contemporary living in Halesowen. This 1st floor spacious apartment above the archway, within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre and buses, the apartment features gas central heating, double glazing, open plan living room/fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with separate shower cubicle, allocated parking. EPC: C



HAGLEY, Newlands Close £575 pcm - Fees A superb modern ground floor apartment located near to Hagley Village & situated close to motorway links. Featuring an open plan lounge/kitchen with appliances, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes and en-suite shower room & 1 large single bedroom, white bathroom suite. Allocated parking, secure entry system. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



NEW
HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £570 pcm - Fees An impressive part furnished 1st floor apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. Comprising 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, spacious lounge with a leather sofa, contemporary kitchen, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. Well worth viewing. EPC: B



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Station Road £550 pcm - Fees A newly decorated & carpeted 3 bedroom mid terraced house in this popular location minutes away from Old Hill train station. This spacious property has 2 reception rooms, downstairs walk in shower room, modern fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms & 1 single. Private rear garden. On road parking. EPC: E



NEW PRICE
CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close £500 pcm - Fees Wonderfully presented and with its own balcony. A 1st floor modern apartment, ideally located from Old Hill train station and local shops benefits from 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom, modern kitchen with washer/dryer, lovely lounge with access to your own private balcony, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. EPC: B



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Mossvale Close £550 pcm - Fees Been tastefully refurbished to a high standard and within walking distance of Old Hill train station is this 3 bedroom mid terrace house. Features a lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, downstairs w.c., small rear garden, garage at rear of property. EPC: TBC



NEW PRICE
HALESOWEN, Stour Court £525 pcm - Fees A great opportunity to rent this spacious and well proportioned ground floor apartment in a popular location, close to the town centre. This modern apartment features a lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, white bathroom suite with shower. Outside there is allocated parking and communal gardens. EPC: C



NEW
HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive £495 pcm - Fees Located within walking distance of central Halesowen. This modern unfurnished 3rd floor apartment, briefly comprising lounge with bay window, kitchen/diner, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, communal gardens, allocated parking space. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street £475 pcm - Fees Undergoing a complete re-decoration. Set in this quiet residential area close to Blackheath Town Centre is this lovely semi detached home featuring lounge, fitted kitchen with gas oven/hob, 1 double bedroom, brand new bathroom with shower, electric heating, parking, unfurnished. EPC: TBC

NEW PRICE
HALESOWEN, Howley Grange Road £440 pcm - Fees Unfurnished ground floor apartment available in this popular location. The property features gas central heating Living room/fitted kitchen with archway through to 1 double bedroom, shower room, allocated parking. Gas (in winter months) and water rates included in the rental. EPC: C



NEW PRICE
OLDBURY, Mallard Drive £425 pcm - Fees Well presented modern ground floor one bedroom apartment in this great location close to motorway links and amenities. Reception hall with intercom, lounge, open plan kitchen with appliances, 1 double bedroom with built in wardrobe, shower room, electric storage heaters, communal garden, allocated parking. Not to be missed! EPC: C

PROPERTY

Two-bedroom residence that dates back to 1857



THE COTT, at 80 Mushroom Green, Dudley Wood, dates back to 1857 and lies in a conservation area.

Perfect for downsizeurs looking for a tranquil bungalow near amenities, the two-bedroom residence also has a loft with conversion potential, which already has a radiator.

Steeped in history, and formally known as the Tuck Shop, it is for sale through Andrew Grant at £270,000.

It has a reception hall, sitting room, kitchen, orangery, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a garage and rear garden.

For further information contact Andrew Grant on (01384) 370232 or visit www.andrew-grant.co.uk



Detached family home is new on housing market

A THREE-BEDROOMED detached house in Vicarage Road, West Bromwich, has just joined the property market. It is for sale through Bartrams at £127,000.

With central heating and double glazing it has an entrance hall with a stained glass window, WC, lounge with bay window and doors to the rear, kitchen with electric cooker and hob, extractor fan, splash back tiling and vinyl flooring.

There is a bathroom with shower, three bedrooms and rear garden with greenhouse and shed.

Call 0121 6019370 or visit the website www.bartrams.com



New direction with the S-Cross

The march of the SUV, or sports utility vehicle, shows no signs of slowing down with several manufacturers announcing their first foray into this field in the past few months.

SUVs are mainly cars with the tall, chunky looks of the off-roader even if most of them aren't: buyers seem to balance appearances with two-wheel drive to save weight, fuel and costs.

It may be a surprise then that Suzuki, with its iconic Vitara and a history of almost half a century of 4x4s, has gone down a different route with its new S-Cross.

Still in car parlance a crossover (the clue's in the name), it's a family-sized hatchback with two or four-wheel drive options that's relatively economical to buy and run.

Top models have a newly developed and sophisticated four-wheel drive system to suit most conditions while remaining lively and economical – and with prices from £21,549 it costs less than some of its two-wheel drive opposition.

Its ALLGRIP system was made specifically for this car: not as many compromises as the traditional full-blown system in the Jimny, but more flexible than the ultra-lightweight rear differential developed for the smaller Swift 4x4.

Clearance

It gives the S-Cross extra capability on and off-road, where the main limiting factor is ground clearance. It certainly made light work of the forest tracks and streams encountered on a test route in the north of England, but unlike a traditional 4x4 remained economical, sharp handling and a comfortable ride on the highway.

There are two engine options, a 1.6 petrol and 1.6 diesel. The petrol version is capable of averaging almost 40mpg while the diesel's figure is a frugal 64mpg. Their 0 to 62mph sprint times are 12 and 13 seconds respectively.

Suzuki's engineers have also come up with an excellent compromise with the suspension: it's supple enough to soak up the bumps on rough tracks yet not so soft as to give you a roly-poly ride on the road. Its dimensions, without the top heavy architecture of some SUVs, helps too.

The steering is nicely weighted and positive, and from its road manners you'd never guess this was a car quite capable of roughing it.

It's as quiet and relaxing to drive as any modern hatchback, it's light but particularly stiff body aiding performance and economy while also reducing noise in the cabin.

No-one, Suzuki included, imagines you'd buy an S-Cross for serious mud-plugging: it's more for the country dweller



who has rough and muddy lanes to travel, or someone who wants extra safety and security in bad weather.

The ALLGRIP control gives you a clue. The basic setting is 'auto' so the car remains in front wheel drive until they start to slip, when the rear wheels are brought into play too. It's there as a safety back-up while giving you best day to day economy. The 'snow' setting, unsurprisingly, uses four-wheel drive as the default setting while also optimises steering and accelerator inputs for maximum traction. The 'lock' mode gives you four-wheel drive for getting yourself out of mud, sand or snow.

There are 13 different S-Cross models, starting with a two-wheel drive petrol version at £14,999. There are two automatic versions, one two wheel drive and one four wheel drive, with a continuously variable transmission.

The top of the range versions are all fitted with ALLGRIP 4WD and are also the highest trim levels, which explains their price tag of up to £23,549 for the diesel flagship. The

diesels also get a six-speed transmission compared to the petrol's five gears. The diesel is also the most economical, with an official average of 64.2mpg and 114g/km of CO₂ emissions compared to the petrol's 51.3mpg and 135g/km.

The decision, as always, will depend on how much you have to spend and, with diesel up to 10p per litre more expensive these days, how many miles you do as to which is best for you.

While it may look smaller than some SUV rivals, the S-Cross is surprisingly roomy inside, with decent leg and headroom for five. It also has a generous cargo space, with a 430-litre boot for your luggage, which you can double by folding down the rear seats. The cabin has a solid, quality feel to it with refreshingly clear and logical controls.

The company has pitched the car just right: a spacious family transporter with an efficient four-wheel drive system for safety and flexibility without sacrificing much in the way of performance or precious fuel.

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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the Suzuki Alto range mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km): Urban 43.5-54.3 (6.5-5.2), Extra Urban 65.7-74.3 (4.3-3.8), Combined 55.4-65.7 (5.1-4.3), CO₂ emissions 118-99 g/km and for the Suzuki Splash range mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km): Urban 40.9-50.4 (6.9-5.6), Extra Urban 56.5-67.3 (5.0-4.2), Combined 49.6-60.1 (5.7-4.7), CO₂ emissions 131-109 g/km and for the Suzuki SX4 range mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km): Urban 32.5-42.8 (8.7-6.6), Extra Urban 50.4-60.1 (5.6-4.7), Combined 42.2-53.3 (6.7-5.3), CO₂ emissions 155-139 g/km and for the Suzuki Swift range mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km): Urban 41.5-46.3 (6.8-6.1), Extra Urban 57.6-64.2 (4.9-4.4), Combined 50.4-56.5 (5.6-5.0), CO₂ emissions 128-116 g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. *Model shown: Alto S24 available from £7,999 (Metallic paint available at £8,399). *VAT free offer on Alto range: Alto 1.0 52 available from £5,899. *Model shown: Splash S24 available from £7,199 (S22 and £10,349 (S24 A/T)) equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £9,899 (Metallic paint available at £11,415). *VAT free offer on Splash range: Splash 1.0 S22 available from £7,999, including customer saving of £1,600 to Splash 1.2 S24 A/T available at £10,645 including customer saving of £2,129 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £12,595 (S22 and £15,899 (1.6 S22 A/T)). *Model shown: SX4 S25 available from £13,249 (Metallic paint available at £14,30). *VAT free offer on SX4 range: SX4 1.6 S23 available from £10,495, including customer saving of £2,100 to SX4 1.6 S25 4x4 available at £13,249 including customer saving of £2,650 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £12,595 (S22 and £15,899 (1.6 S25 4x4)). *Model shown: Swift S24 available from £12,199 (Metallic paint available at £14,30). *VAT free offer on Swift range: Swift 1.2 S22 3dr available from £8,999, including a customer saving of £1,800 to Swift 1.2 S24 5dr 4x4 available at £13,699 including customer saving of £2,740 which is equivalent to the VAT amount of the previous on the road price of £10,791 (S22 3dr) and £16,439 (S24 5dr 4x4). VAT Free offer excludes Swift Sport. Offer subject to availability for vehicles privately registered between 1st July 2014 to 30th September 2014 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print.

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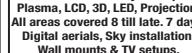
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74,600 miles, very good condition.
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VW GOLF, blue Y reg, Mk4 1.8SDI, 5 door, 112k miles, tax and MoT, CD, a/c, pas, electric windows, £1,275. 0no. 07754 557861.

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MAURICE gentleman, 59, gentle, kind, caring, loving, generous, seeks lady with GSOH and similar personality, slim-medium build. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412859 □

MALE seeking female companion for outings, friendship and holidays. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412705

STEPHEN 58, good looking, likes art, travel, seeking female, plus for companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412633 □

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JOHN 40's, tall, athletic, active, adventurous, cheeky, tactile, fun, open teeth, loves life, seeks similar fun female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414067 □

TALL 42y old sincere male, caring, honest, seeking female, 30-40 for fun, friendship and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412261

JOAN 40's, tall, slender, active, adventurous, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks likeminded female to share fun and happiness with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 357253

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ALAN 49, seek lady for discreet no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413757

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IAN 65, romantic, likes to wine/dine, days out, seeking young female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413707 □

MARK full loving, easy going, fair hair, blue eyes, athletic, tanned, looking for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411989 □

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MARK 5ft 11ins, blond hair, blue eyes, slim-medium build, athletic, likes nights in/out, socialising, meals out, pub, seeks female with similar interests and GSOH for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411335 □

TONY young looking 50 male, 5ft 8ins, many interests, easy going, seeks slim rock chick or similar for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413275

GENT widower, late 60's, looks younger, GSOU, likes music, good food, country pursuits, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413173 □

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Covatti is so near to dream of GP glory

FORMER Brummies' speedway star Nico Covatti came within a whisker of a spot in the 2015 Grand Prix series following a spectacular display in the GP Challenge in Lonigo.

Having been handed a wildcard for the event, Covatti almost caused a major upset.

After notching three points from his opening two rides, the Birmingham favourite rounded Matej Zagar in stunning style to race to a marvelous win in heat 11.

When he dusted himself down from an opening bend fall to repeat the trick in his very next ride, Covatti was left with a real chance of qualifying entering his final ride.

Jason Doyle and Chris Harris quickly booked their place in the all-important top three – although when they were joined by Zagar, who is on course for a top-eight finish in the 2014 World Championship, the battle for fourth place became crucial.

Entering heat 19, Covatti knew a race win would see him overhaul Maciej Janowski and all but assure qualification for the 2015 GP campaign. In a re-run, though, he could only manage third place.

Caddis is praised by manager

BIRMINGHAM manager Lee Clark has given a passionate defence of Paul Caddis after supporters criticised his ability to play in central midfield.

Caddis was described as the 'weak link' by Blues fans on social media after the recent 2-0 defeat to Sheffield Wednesday, but Clark believes the criticism is unfair.

He said: "What Birmingham fans need to realise is I've scouted and watched Paul for many years and he plays a variety of positions, central midfield, right midfield and right-back. His most preferred position is central midfield."

"Paul struggled at times last season when he played at right-back."

Gardner hopes fans will see 'real' Baggies

Football

MIDFIELDER Craig Gardner hopes fans will see the real Albion' after they claimed their first Premier League win under Alan Irvine.

The Baggies won 1-0 at Tottenham on Sunday to lift the pressure on new boss Irvine. And Gardner believes the confidence generated by the win at White Hart Lane will allow Albion to express themselves.

"It's nice to get the first win on the board," said Gardner. "We've got Burnley next, which is another massive game."

"The pundits on Sunday thought we were going to get hammered so it's a great buzz to prove them wrong. We know how

good we are once we get playing and once we get our confidence up, so after Sunday hopefully people will start seeing the real West Brom."

"We knew we could do it. As a team we all knew how well we could play. We had been working all week on it and the gaffer is some brilliant points across before the game."

"He told us where they were weak around the back and it proved his point when

James Morrison got the goal. The way we played was fantastic because the gaffer had us working hard in the week and it paid off.

"It was our best performance and that's obviously because we're starting to get our full team out there."

"Joleon Lescott played on Sunday. Stephane Sessegnon was back and we have Youssouf Mulumbu and Victor Anichebe, who aren't fully fit, to come back. The more players we get back fully fit, the better we will be. You can't know what the gaffer is like until you work with him because he's a brilliant coach."

And Gardner joined the chorus of praise

for summer signing Joleon Lescott, who impressed on his debut at White Hart Lane.

"If he's got any more fitness to come I can't wait to play with him," joked Gardner.

Special

"His experience is amazing and when you look around and see him there it gives a big boost to the whole team."

Lescott himself declared his winning Albion debut 'extra special' as he hailed their tactical success. The former Wolves star produced a man-of-the-match performance.

Albion's first victory of the season lifted them up to fifth from bottom.

Lescott is inspiration for Albion, says Foster

BEN Foster is underlining Joleon Lescott's value to Albion after his stunning debut at Spurs.

The former Wolves, Everton and Manchester City star was man of the match in the Baggies' 1-0 win at White Hart Lane and England keeper Foster is convinced his mere presence in the side gives team-mates a lift.

Lescott, aged 32, has played at the very top with England and won titles with City and the Albion stopper believes his influence could be key for Baggy in the months ahead.

"A lot of lads spark off Joleon. He has got that bit of an aura about him," said Foster. "All the lads around him raise their game when he's there. Fair play to 'Joe', the way he read the game on Sunday was absolutely incredible."

Surprise

"His vision is fantastic and it's nice to have players like that in front of you. We saw it with Craig Dawson as well, he was heading, kicking, blocking and everything. He was absolutely top class as well."

Albion boss Alan Irvine – to the surprise of many supporters – has stuck with Dawson despite a summer of uncertainty surrounding this 24-year-old.

Burnley were keen to sign the centre-half but Albion rejected their advances and he has been an ever-present this season, despite Gareth McAuley sitting on the sidelines.

"We knew exactly what we were going to do. We watched a lot of videos of Tottenham."

And Foster was happy with his centre-halves as they shut-out Spurs.

Football

"Joleon has been unlucky. He's had a few little knocks and injuries and when you don't get a good pre-season under your belt it can set you back a few weeks, and in Joleon's case a good month really," he added.

"He's been eager to get back in the starting line-up and he did himself no harm on Sunday with that performance, which was absolutely fantastic. If him and Daws are going to play like that every weekend it will help us no end."

"It was good to get off the mark with a win as well."

"If we hadn't won that, Burnley would have been a huge game, but we can take a lot of confidence from this going into Burnley now."

The England keeper has been frustrated by Albion's slow start and is keen to remind the critics that they're not that far away from reaching top form. And he's highlighting Irvine's meticulous planning as one of the reasons behind the Baggies' revival.

"We knew exactly what we were going to do. We watched a lot of videos of Tottenham."

And Foster was happy with his centre-halves as they shut-out Spurs.

Last-minute kick in teeth for Old Halesonians



Pete Fitzgerald scores for Halesonians with Warren Oliver and Nathan Jones joining in the celebrations

Old Halesonians 24 Nuneaton 26

OLD Halesonians lost in the last minute to the league leaders.

Old Hales regrouped from last week's disappointment and took part in one of the best games seen at Walsall Grove for many years.

Hales put in an aggressive, powerful show of strength in all departments.

The home side's tackling was ferocious with Loz Breese, Tom Jordan

and Pete Fitzgerald leading the way.

On 25 minutes, the backs fed wing Luke Smith who outpaced his man for a try wide out converted by Chris Hooper.

Five minutes later, strong tackling in the backs saw Smith again collect the ball in midfield and sprint half of the pitch to again beat his winger for a try. Nuneaton came back with a penalty.

Fitzgerald set off on a run and the

try made it 19-3 at half time. But home scrum half Jones received a yellow card for a tackle. Tom Jordan then drove over for a 24-13 lead.

Then there was a period littered with penalties against Hales and it was pulled back to 24-20.

Another penalty put the visitors within a point and Nuneaton knocked over yet another penalty awarded on 79 minutes to win by just two points.

Dropped Olsson is 'still vital for team'

DELIGHTED

Alan Irvine insists Jonas Olsson remains a key player for Albion after dropping the Swede for his first win as Baggies boss.

Irvine preferred summer signing Joleon Lescott for the 1-0 win at Tottenham with Olsson left at home after mistakes in the defeats to Swans and Everton cost his side early goals.

Lescott responded with a commanding Baggies debut as James Morrison gave Albion a first Premier League win of the season to ease the pressure on Irvine.

But the Scot insisted Olsson still has a major role to play.

"Jonas wasn't injured," said Irvine. "I spoke to him on Saturday and told him what my intentions were. That wasn't easy because I have a lot of respect for Jonas. He's a top professional."

"But he knows that he made a couple of uncharacteristic mistakes in the last couple of games that have been costly."

"For the first time I've had a full range of options available and that makes life more difficult in some ways because I had some big decisions to make and I had to look people in the eye to tell them why I was making them."

Moeen Ali is top man at awards

WORCESTERSHIRE star Moeen Ali has been named Professional Sportsman Of The Year at the Birmingham Sports Awards.

Birmingham Knights basketball Captain Michael Gayle and British sprinter Danny Talbot were also nominated for the award.

Birmingham-born Moeen, who was educated at Moseley School, broke into the England side for the winter tour of the West Indies and ICC World T20 tournament in Bangladesh.

Then Moeen played in all seven Tests this summer and picked up 19 wickets in the series against India in addition to scoring his maiden Test century. Moeen then helped Worcestershire gain promotion.

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Loan to Bolton is now finalised

ASTON Villa defender Chris Herd has completed a move to Bolton on a one-month loan deal.

The 25-year-old Australia international can play anywhere in defence.

Bolton boss Dougie Freedman said: "With the small squad we have got, I need to make sure when I sign a player that they can play one or two different positions."

"Chris ticks that box. He's going to be very valuable in a difficult run of games."

Meanwhile, Villa head to Chelsea on Saturday in the Premier League.

And defender Philippe Senderos is relishing a return with the Blues Cesc Fabregas.

The pair lived together during their early years at Arsenal and have maintained contact, with Fabregas crediting Senderos with helping him settle.

"We are still very good friends," said Villa's Senderos.

"We moved into digs together in the first year that I was in England and we still get on. So it is a long friendship."

"He didn't speak a word of English when he moved to Arsenal. So I was next to him and trying to help him in everything he needed. But he picked it up pretty quickly."

Trophy win is fifth in a row

HALESOWEN Swimming club have lifted the Braintree Sports Trophy for the fifth year in a row.

Double event winners were Josh Bradley, James Cuthbert and Mark Laing.

Other individual winners were Lily Merrell, Jacob Darby and Jack Simpson.

The relay teams were strong with both the girls and boys age 13 and under teams, including Emma Bird, Amber Harrison, India Hanke, Robert Jennings and Owen Crump, unbeatable.

The 11 and under girls, including Isobelle Cashmore, Melissa and Sophie Parsons and Holly Simpson, won the freestyle relay.

The 15 and under girls of Molly Kelly, Lauren Hill and Talia Mitchel won the medley relay and the men's team, including Ryan Davies and Luke Morris, rounded off by winning the final freestyle relay.

Berahino leaves it late as Albion reach last 16

ALBION left it late to book their place in the last 16 of the Capital One Cup, where they will travel to Bournemouth.

Saido Berahino netted a last-gasp winner to add to the feelgood factor that has grown around The Hawthorns following the surprise win at Tottenham.

A totally new Baggies side bossed the first half last night (Wednesday) and deservedly led through a first goal from record signing Brown Ideye. But they found themselves behind as Tom Ince and Robbie Brady netted either side of half-time to fire Hull ahead against the run of play.

Football

Albion seemed to be heading out until Gareth McAuley's 88th-minute equaliser appeared to have set-up extra-time. And then one better a minute later when substitute Berahino pounced on a pass from debutant Silvestre Varela and netted the goal that set up the last-16 tie at the Goldsands Stadium.

The Baggies opener arrived on 15 minutes with full debutants Liam O'Neil and Sebastian Blanco involved before Ideye

forced home a rebound from a Steve Harper save.

The Nigeria man got clattered as he finished, however, and his post-goal involvement consisted of another six, limping minutes. He was unable to shake off the knock and was replaced on 21 minutes by fellow summer arrival Georgios Samaras.

Albion had dominated the opening half but, four minutes before the interval, their defence went AWOL and gifted Hull an equaliser. Robbie Brady was given time and space to cross from the left and Ince was unmarked to fire the ball home.

Just five minutes into the second half more dismal Baggies defending allowed them to score a classy but all-too-easy second as Brady latched onto Hatem Ben Arfa's fine through-ball and produced a smart, first-time finish.

In the closing moments a 20-yard effort from Blanco was deflected wide for corner which resulted in the Baggies leveller, as O'Neil's flag-kick sparked pinball in the box and McAuley smashed home a half-volley. And just a minute later the turnaround was complete as Berahino slotted the ball inside the far post from a tight angle.

Tividale beaten at home

TIVIDALE came up short against impressive Leek Town, going down to a 2-1 home defeat on Tuesday night.

On Leek's first attack they won a corner and the ball fell to Matt Bell whose shot through a crowded area beat the unsighted Charles Price in Tividale's goal.

Five minutes later Tividale were level when a driven free-kick by Mitchell Botfield was met by Mark Smith and his firm header gave Leek keeper Ben Chapman no chance.

In the last 15 minutes of the half, Leek enjoyed the majority of the possession but the Tividale defence stood firm.

Leek seized control and Dan Shelley's shot grazed the outside of Price's post before the keeper saved with his legs from Ashley Jackson.

Tividale came back before the break and David Bellis hit a shot that skimmed the crossbar.

Leek were again on top in the second half and on 75 minutes Jordan Johnson capitalised on indecision in the home defence to turn the ball into the net for the winner.

Slam of Darts back for 2015

THE Grand Slam of Darts will be back in the Black Country for the ninth straight year in 2015.

Wolverhampton Civic Hall will stage the tournament from November 7-15 after the Professional Darts Corporation confirmed its calendar for next year. The event will carry world ranking points for the first time.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, September 25.

FA CUP CAN HELP YELTZ FIND FORM

HALESOWEN Town are in FA Cup action on Saturday in the second qualifying round.

They head to East Midlands Counties League side Ellistown and Ibstock United for the first-ever meeting between the two sides.

The Leicestershire team have already come through three rounds. Their best result was knocking out Hereford United, who have pulled off some big FA Cup shocks themselves down the years.

Hopefully, Yeltz will be able to shake off their poor league form to make progress.

At the weekend, Halesowen slumped to their fourth loss in six games as they lost 1-0 at Ashton United.

Foul

Halesowen made two changes to the side as Neil Mackenzie and Joe Hull took the places of Elliott Turner and Danny Bragoli in the starting 11.

Yeltz thought they had taken an early lead through a header from Lyseden Christie, but it was disallowed as he fouled the goalkeeper.

Chris Lait went close on the 15-minute mark. He cut into the penalty area and hit a shot which was saved.

Halesowen pressed for the lead with Robert Thompson having two chances in quick succession.

At the start of the second half, Christie's header just flew wide of the right hand post for Yeltz and Tom Tonks blasted the ball over the bar a minute later.

"We will continue to work hard and strengthen the side."

Afterwards, manager John Hill said: "We just can't buy a goal and it feels like we get punished for every mistake we make.

The in-form Heathens hosted their arch rivals desperate to claim another big win in pursuit of a place in the Grand Final. The rain put paid to their plans as it forced Tuesday night's meeting to be abandoned after

Rain stops Cradley Heathens in their tracks



Cradley's Danny Phillips and Matt Williamson tackle a rain-soaked Monmore track during the semi-final

CRADLEY saw their National League play-off semi-final tie with Milden hall washed out at Wolverhampton's Monmore Green.

The in-form Heathens hosted their arch rivals desperate to claim another big win in pursuit of a place in the Grand Final. The rain put paid to their plans as it forced Tuesday night's meeting to be abandoned after

just seven races, with Cradley 26-16 in front. The tie has provisionally been rearranged for next Tuesday.

Cradley got off to a perfect start as Nathan Greaves overcame a stuck throttle to hold his nerve and win heat one in fine style.

He was joined at the front by birthday boy Steve Worrall before reserve duo Matt Williamson and Danny

Phillips combined for a second Cradley 5-1 as they made an excellent start.

There were several falls as riders from both sides struggled to cope with slippery conditions before the meeting was called to a halt.

Heathens will now turn their attentions to a trip to Coventry in the second leg of their Knockout Cup semi-final tomorrow night.

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